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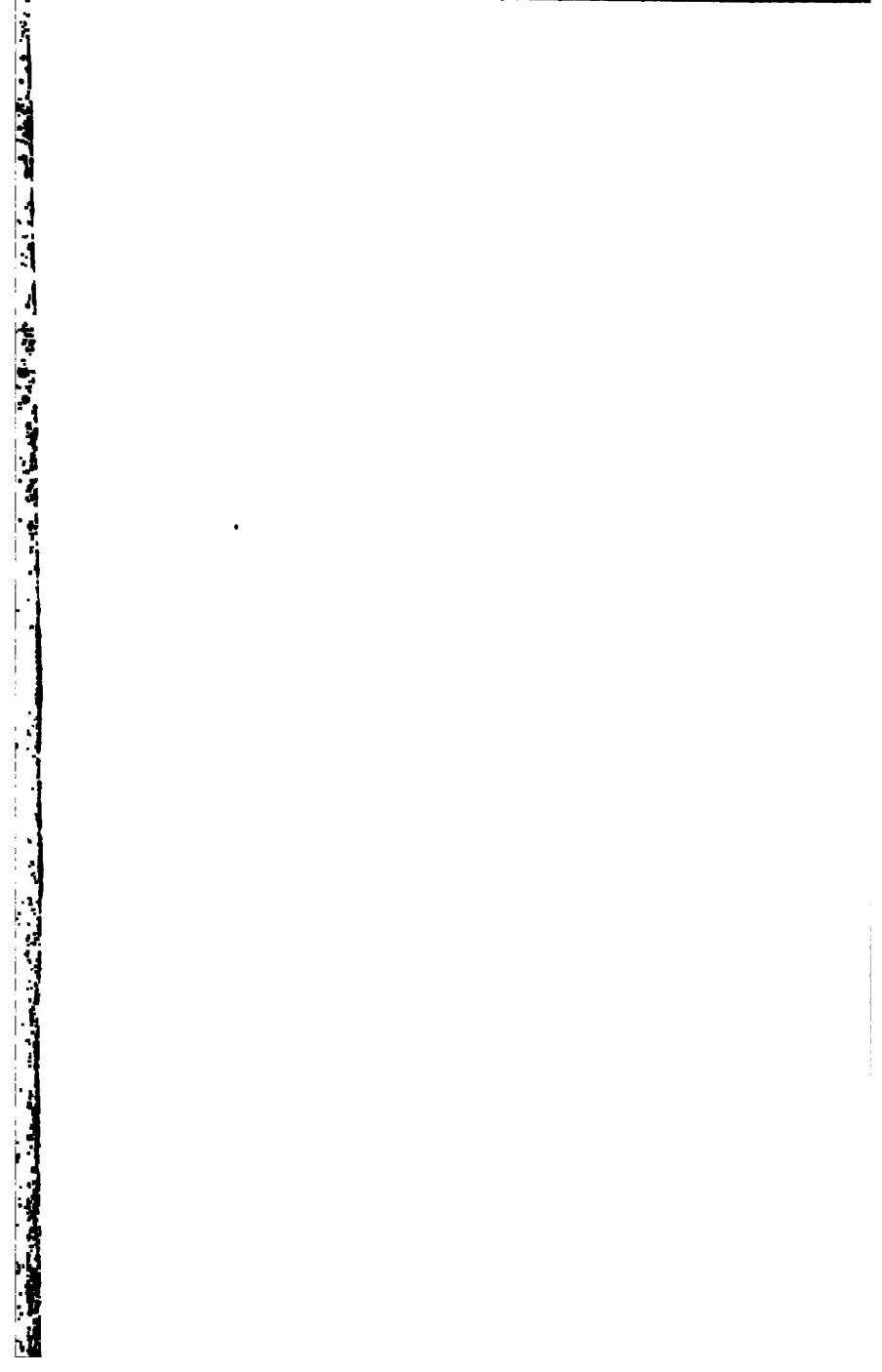
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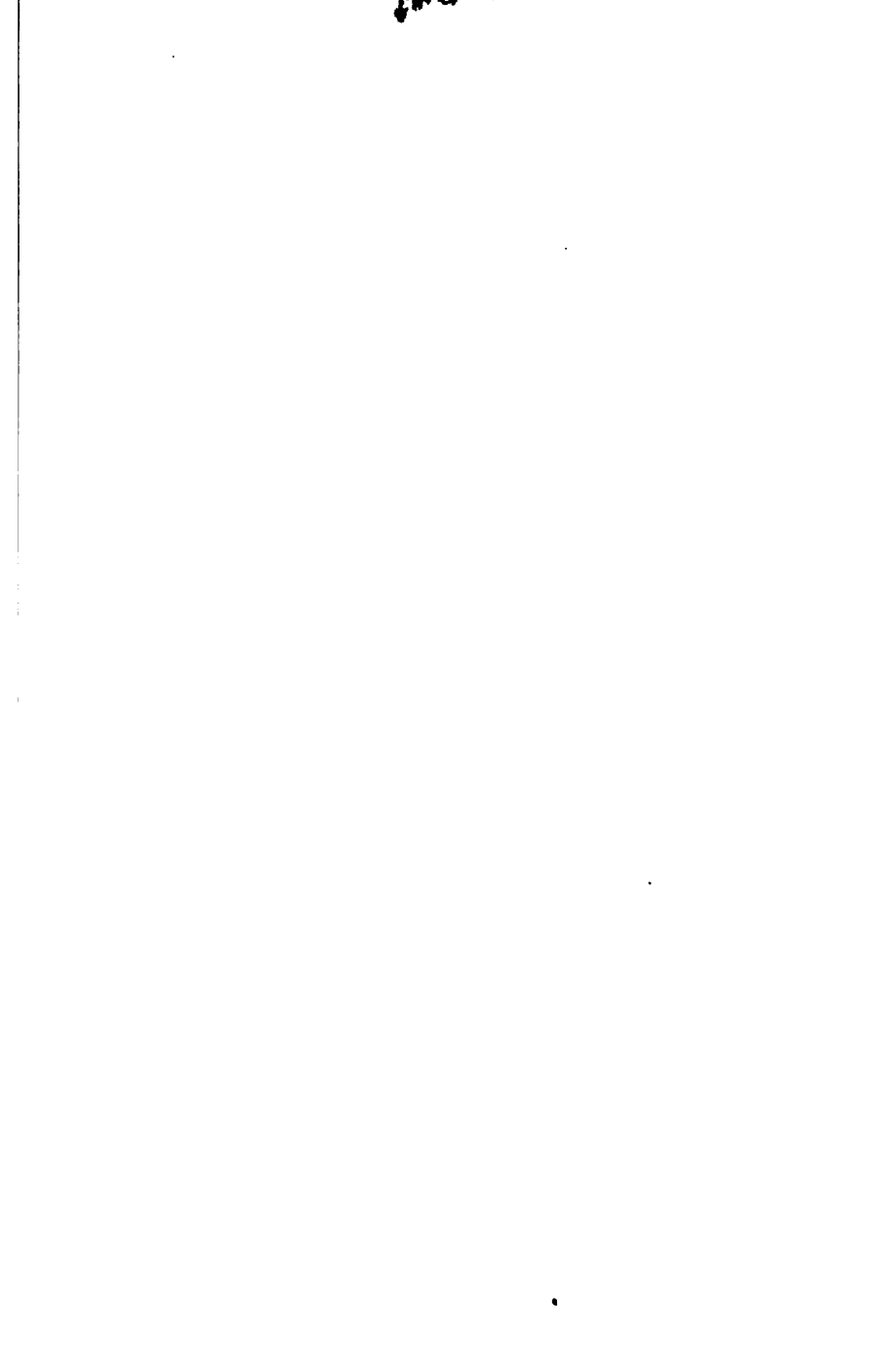


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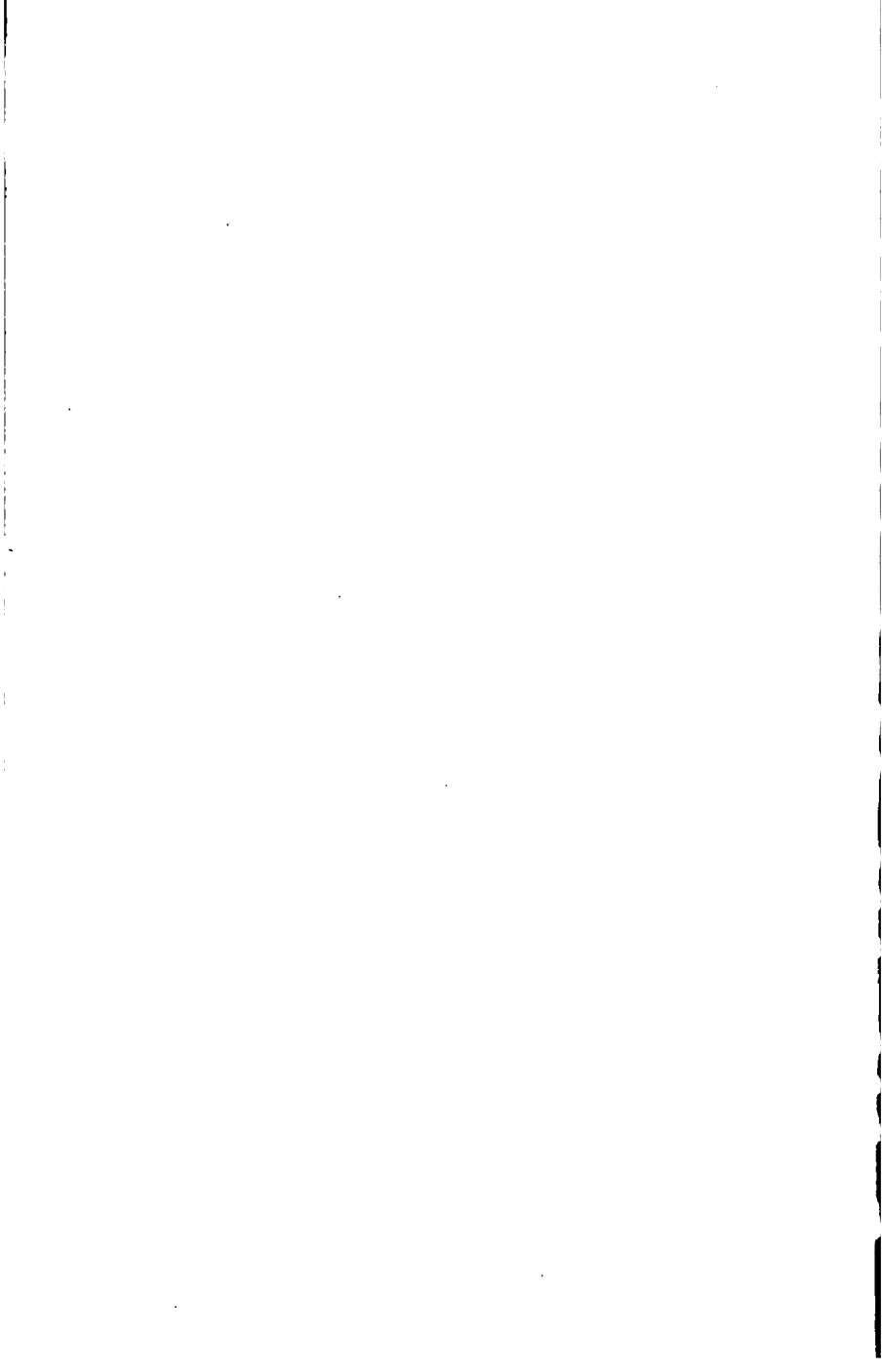






THE AMATEUR

CHARLES G. NORRIS



· THE AMATEUR ·

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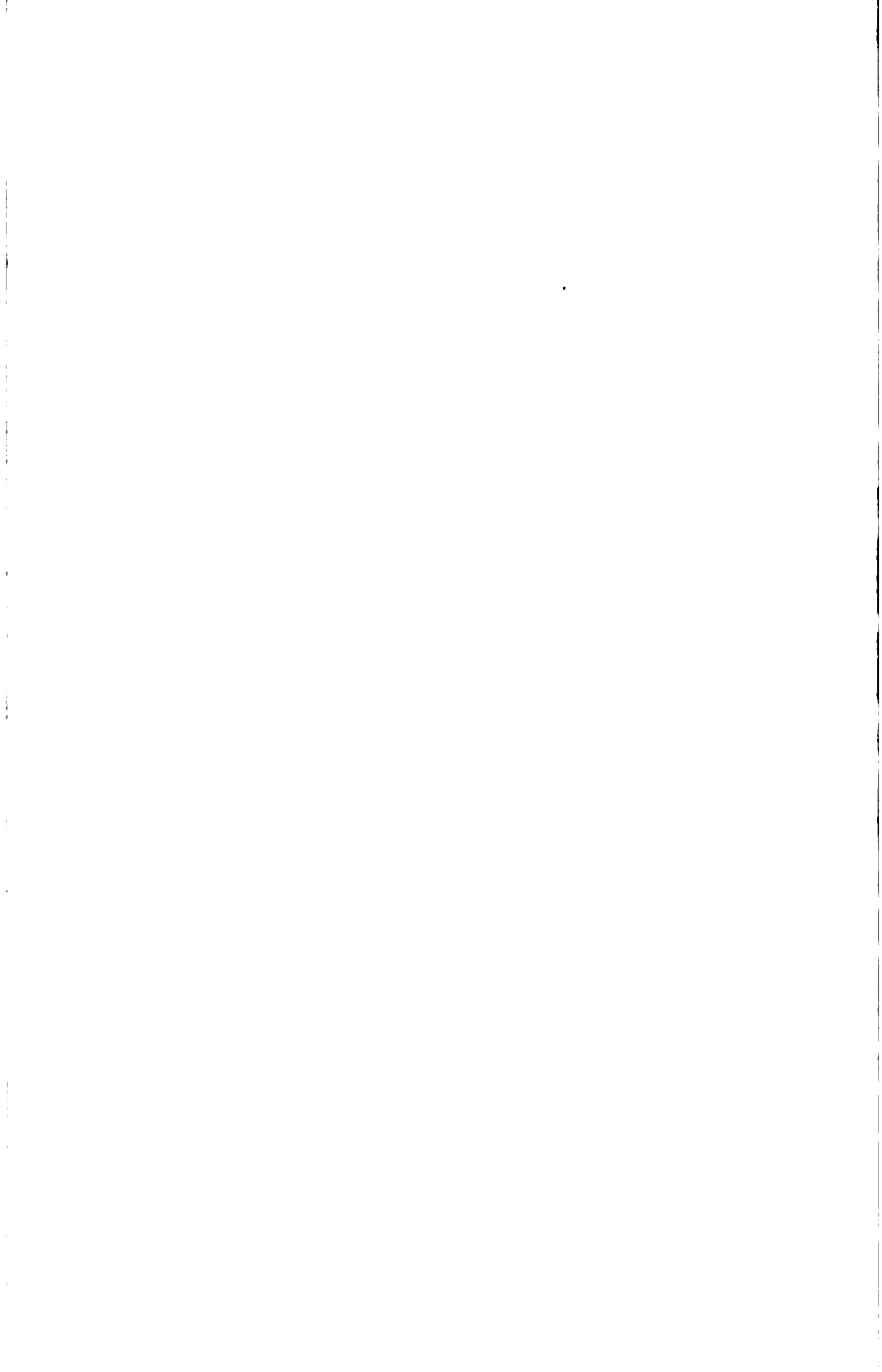
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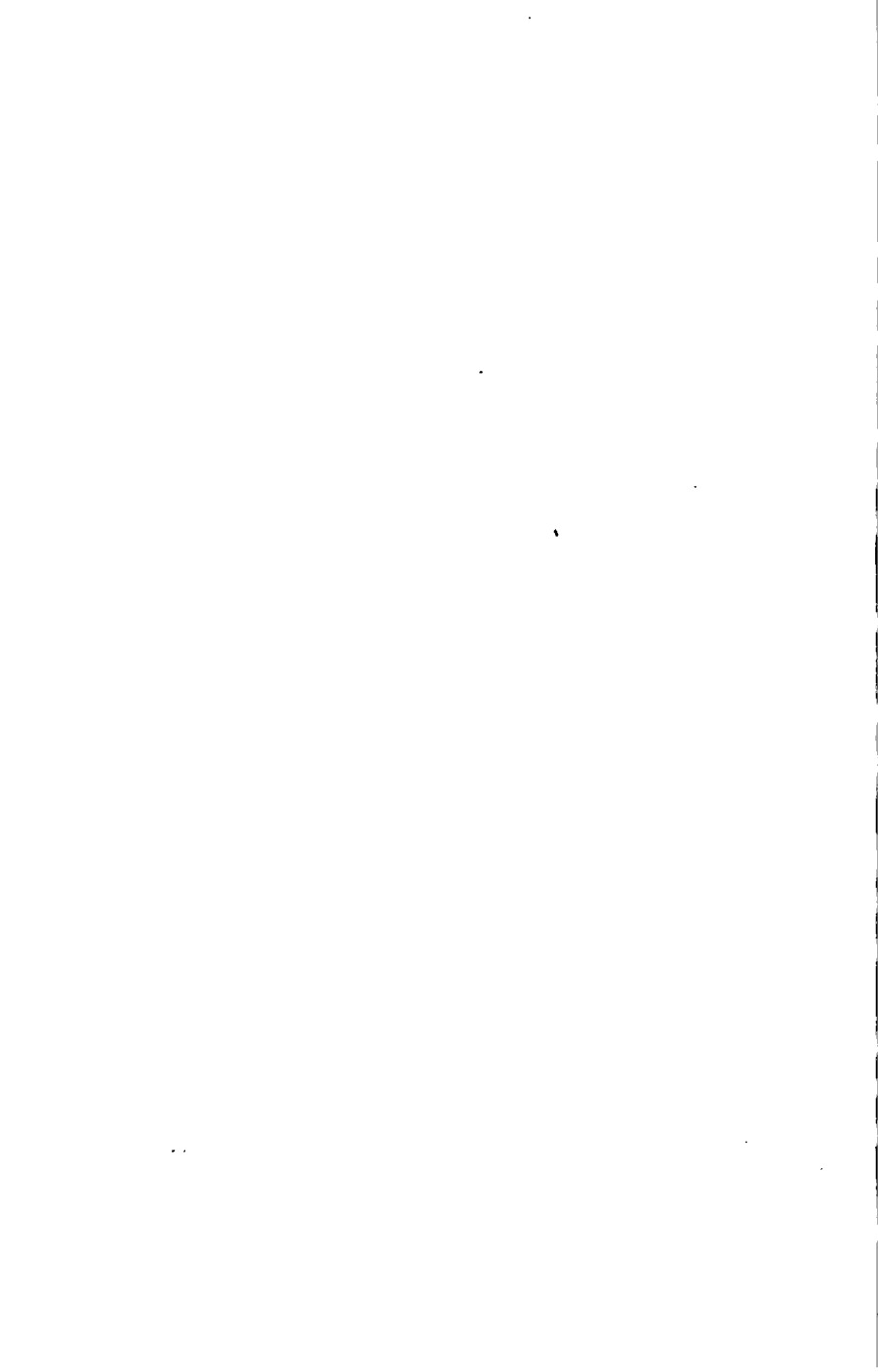
HENRY MORSE STEPHENS

TO MY MOTHER

**Whose courage, keen humor, rare wisdom and high ideals
have always been an inspiration to at
least one amateur**



PART ONE



PART ONE

CHAPTER I

AT Buffalo Carey Williams abandoned the luxury of the Pullman sleeping-car for the cheerless comfort of a day coach. The routeing of his passes changed from the Erie to the Lackawanna Railroad at this point and there were no sleepers attached to the train over the latter road. He felt that he could not afford a seat in the chair cars. Two meals in the diner remained to be paid for,—provided he gave up lunch again. He wanted to arrive in New York with the seal of the envelope that contained the two hundred dollars unbroken.

"Ten dollars will take care of the grub and tips and I'll land in New York with your greenbacks untouched," he had declared confidently to Joe before he had left home.

His mother and Joe Downer had come down to see him off. Beneath the arching glass roof of the great station, he had sauntered up and down between them, his arms hooked in theirs, while late arrivals, who were to be his fellow passengers, had hurried past the barred grating of the gate, carrying grips and overcoats, their tickets in their hands, porters following at their heels with the heavier luggage.

The train that was to carry him a thousand miles away, had towered impressively beside them. It had appeared to Carey like some gigantic caterpillar, potentially terrific, a thing of mystery and alarm. Far out beyond the span of the great roof of the station, glistening sombrely in the sun, he had seen the black steaming machine, at the head of the long string of coaches, in whose bowels lay the power that was to whirl him across the intervening mountains and great stretches of prairie. The doors of the baggage cars had stood hungrily open; men had attacked the great piles of trunks at furious speed; Pullman porters beside their rubber-topped steps at the vestibule entrances to the sleeping cars, had examined tickets thrust nervously in their faces; conductors, brakemen, telegraph messengers and newsboys had passed them running; there had prevailed a tense, pulsing note of haste and purpose.

Carey had felt the thrill of it. It had been incongruous and out of keeping with the bustle about them to idly walk up and down between his mother and Joe. They all had caught the excitement of the departure and talked among themselves at random.

"I'll start with an even two hundred," Carey had reiterated to Joe. "I'll not touch a penny of it, till I reach New York."

Joe had nodded slowly in his clumsy fashion. He had accepted Carey's declaration gravely, as he did whatever the boy asserted.

"But no drinking, Carey," his mother had said anxiously. "You've promised me, you know. Remember all I've said, my boy. Tippling and 'something to steady your nerves'! Oh, Carey, you *will* remember! Be a good boy always. And you'll write regularly! And if you get into trouble you'll wire, won't you, Carey?"

"Oh, don't worry about me, Mother! You won't need to bother," he had said with swaggering assurance. "I'll make good. I may find out I can't draw,—that I can't make illustrations, but I'll get along. There's always a job cleaning the streets. Just wait and see; I'll be sending Joe twenty on account inside of six months!"

"Aw, you mustn't let that worry you. I don't need it, you know, Carey. Take your time about it; I don't care if it's a couple of years. And you understand where to turn if you need more!"

Carey had been aware that as Joe had said this he had been gazing at him with the humble dog-like expression that Carey had found so irritating during the past few months. He had been thinking how glad he was going to feel away from them all, how free he would be, when the hurried pace of bustle and preparation about them abruptly increased to a final spurt. There had been a swift moment when he had gripped his mother tightly in his arms and had felt her wet cheek against his, when he had wrung Joe's hand in a grasp that made his fingers tingle, and when he had turned an instant later to wave to them from the vestibule of the Pullman. Then slowly, almost imperceptibly, the great caterpillar had begun to move.

That was two days ago. In forty-eight hours a subtle change had already begun to take place within him. He felt his point-of-view shifting, shifting. His complete assurance was shaken; no longer was it glad, confident morning with him. He wondered a little that he had been irritated by his mother and by Joe,—Joe who was so steadfast, so patient, so devoted. He was too old, he told himself, to be homesick, and if these softened thoughts of his mother and Joe were symptoms of that feeling, he determined not to let himself think about

them. Resolutely he turned to the window of the car and stared out at the revolving landscape.

It was the thirty-first of May. As the train wound along through the rolling country, Carey could see spring, in the full glory of its maturity, had turned the whole surface of the earth into a patch-work of verdant tones. The last pages of "The Letters of a Self-Made Merchant to his Son"—four copies of the book had been parting gifts from well-wishing friends at home—no longer held any fascination for the boy. This, that he finally gazed upon, was the East, the land of his hopes and dreams. It was all so different from what he had been used to at home. Most of all—it was the greenness of things that drew his admiration. He was accustomed to grass and trees, beautifully kept lawns and orchards, but nothing ever so fresh, so violently green as this colour through the car window. Every characteristic of the country that meant for him "the East" gladdened his heart: the nearness of the cities to each other, the rambling stone walls, the farm houses, even those with roofs made hideous by advertisements,—above all, the trees. Never had he seen so many trees so close together. He was always to carry with him the memory of the rolling, billowy, green tree tops below the elevation of the railroad track, that stretched away on either side, a velvety carpet to the horizon's edge. Woods! That was it. There were forests out West, thick masses of underbrush, or what he would have described as timber land. But he realised that he had never before seen real woods.

A town's name upon a station platform brought suddenly to him the pleasant realisation that the state line had been passed and that the train was speeding through Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania! That was something like!

Somehow the thought that at last he was in the Quaker State meant more to him than when he had changed cars in Buffalo that morning. He supposed he was on New York soil then, but one never associated Buffalo and New York. Pennsylvania! Penn's Woods! No wonder they called it that.

Carey was not aware that it was Sunday until, toward the middle of the afternoon, the train reached Delaware Water Gap. Then that fact, and that the preceding day had been Decoration Day—two holidays in succession—was borne in upon him by the crowds of happy, tired people who climbed upon his train and filled it to overflowing. Somehow, with their advent, his elation and high spirits left him. The last pleasant sensation was a glimpse of a stretch of blue water, canoes and tiny sailboats, and a crowd of laughing girls and boys of about his own age, in duck and flannels, who waved farewells to departing friends from the station platform, as the train left the Water Gap behind.

A baby, with sticky face and hands, leaned from the arms of its fat and unheeding mother, who had installed herself and her many bundles into the seat directly behind Carey, seized his straw hat and flung it with a gurgling crow into the aisle. Two girls on the other side of the car tittered, and Carey, recovering his hat with as much dignity as he could across the lap of an old gentleman who shared his seat, experienced his first real pang of loneliness and homesickness.

He was an alien. The holiday-makers about him, hilariously noisy, were not of the world he knew. They were different, of another character. He edged towards the window and tried to make himself as unobtrusive and inconspicuous as he could. But his interest in the racing country was gone. No longer did it seem so

green, so fresh, so virginal. Clouds out of the east began to bank. Soon the sun disappeared.

About six o'clock he scrambled out of his seat and worked his way back through the crowded, swaying day-coaches, towards the diner. He had to wait in the vestibule for half an hour, as the preference for seats was invariably given to the passengers occupying the chair cars. Eventually the dining-car conductor beckoned him to a vacant place at one of the tables, and he ate his meagre supper of ham and eggs and coffee with an embarrassed sense that his frugality was generally observed. He hesitated between apple pie for himself or a tip for the waiter and finally weakly decided on the latter. Forlornly, hungrily, he made his way back to his own car.

Some two hours later, lugging his heavy suitcase, he followed the black stream of people that hurried along the station platform. Upon leaving the friendly car that had kept him company all day, the sense of his loneliness and depression became complete. No one cast a look at him; not one of those flashing smiles that marked the meeting of friendly eyes through the station grating were for him. Everyone else had some destination eagerly to be sought and reached. It did not matter where he spent the night. If he should be found dead somewhere, no one—not a single person of all these that pressed about him, nor in all that great, mysterious, gigantic metropolis across the river—could tell who Carey Williams was, or would care.

An electric sign above his head directed him to the Christopher Street ferry. The "baggage delivered" man who had passed through the train, and to whom Carey had surrendered the check for his trunk, had explained in a friendly, interested sort of a way just how the boy was to reach the hotel he mentioned. Carey recalled

with comfort the pleasant smile and nod, and, as if to assure himself again of one fellow-being's well wishes, he drew the slip of paper the man had given him from his pocket and reread for the twentieth time the three lines of scrawled writing: "Christopher St. Ferry—8th Street cross town—Church with cross." The last was to identify the hotel, which had some vague connection in Carey's mind with a church of the same name. A friend of his mother had once stopped there and recommended it as "elegant and inexpensive."

An iron gate in front of him shut up suddenly like a pair of huge lazy-tongs, and the crowd behind him briskly surged forward, carrying him with it. He presently found himself on the front, blunt end of the ferry boat, close to the rail, and there, just beyond a few hundred yards of water, in one great sweep—up and down—as far as the darkness would let one see—crouching, menacing, mysterious, enchanting—bewilderingly entangled—lay New York.

Carey got the thrill of it. It reached out and gripped him and engulfed him and swept him along with it. In an instant—in the twinkling of an eye—the marvelous fascination that drew millions of souls within its compelling force, to make it what it was, added Carey to their number.

The struggle was there, the bitter combat, the grim fight without quarter. He sensed the daily sacrifice of countless lives, the relentless crushing of men's souls and bodies. A monster it might be—but one worth conquering. Now was the time at hand for the great effort; now was the time for girding up one's loins! He thought of Goliath and David. Did he have a pebble in his bag and the skill to hurl it?

It had all seemed a fine thing to attempt, back home.

He had held forth at length to Joe and to his mother as to what he should do when he reached New York. But it was different now. He possessed a letter of introduction to one man in that great city. That and his ability and his constancy were all the weapons he had at hand wherewith to meet the enemy.

"By God," he said between his teeth, his hands shut tight upon the boat's rail; "I'll not be a quitter. They sha'n't know if I fail!"

Presently, on either side of him, the black piles of the slip rose up out of the darkness and the ferry boat, bumping and scraping its sides, nosed its way into its dock.

The street car was crowded. Carey struggled on to the back platform and set down his bulky suitcase as much out of the way as possible, but evidently he failed to do so to the satisfaction of the conductor. As more passengers forced their way into the car, the man turned to him angrily:

"Is that yours?"

"Yes."

"Well, take it out of there!"

Carey stumbled forward, groping for the handle of the suitcase. The bell rang, the car lurched. He tripped over some one's foot, but managed to shove the offending luggage further into the corner.

This was his welcome! These were the first words addressed to him! He straightened himself with difficulty, his hat awry, tears of hot mortification and utter forlornness welling up into his eyes. He winked them back savagely and gazed out into the street with its squat, dingy houses, their opened doorways aflood with light, people sitting upon their steps, the pavement swarming with children.

In a moment he had control of himself and, when the conductor turned to him for his fare, he stared fiercely at him as he handed him his nickel. The malignity of his gaze was unnoticed, but Carey nevertheless felt that the words of stern rebuke that he formulated in his mind had been spoken, and the conductor put in his place.

He found the courage presently to ask a thin, elderly person with a scraggy beard, who had wedged in next to him, how soon the car would reach the street where he knew he must get off. The man, noticing him for the first time, eyed him curiously, aware at once that he was a stranger in the city. He nodded his grey head at him several times emphatically, indicating that he understood, and presently, after the car had trundled past several crossings and Carey had about made up his mind that his question had been forgotten, the man grunted and, as the car came to a standstill, gave Carey's arm a claw-like clutch and, pointing the direction with a bony finger, shoved him energetically in the back.

Carey extricated his suitcase with difficulty and in another moment found himself on the street corner, still with a miserable feeling of being forsaken, as the crowded car went on bumping and jangling down the street.

But his loneliness left him a moment later when his eyes fell upon a well-known landmark just two short blocks away. It was almost like meeting an unexpected friend. With a sudden return of interest, he peered up at the street names on the lamp-post. Fifth Avenue! This was it! He was on Fifth Avenue! One of the great thoroughfares of the world! And what a noble, majestic street it was, with its rows of lights alternately placed on either side of the street, converging gradually

in parallel lines, melting into a distant haze of mysterious, pale glory!

And that was the Washington Arch! He had seen many photographs and pictures of it. One of his most successful posters back home had been made from a photograph of it. Beyond there must be Washington Square. A confused murmur of sound came to him from that direction. As he picked up his suitcase and turned toward it, it increased in volume until presently he became aware that it arose from the shrill cries of many children at play. The Square was teeming with them, roller-skating, shouting, screaming. A mad ecstasy, a wild abandon seemed to possess them.

It was about nine o'clock, and the night was very warm. The trees were heavy with their new foliage. On the benches sat the children's elders, Italians for the most part, foreigners almost entirely. The mingled jargon of their voices raised in altercation made a distinct minor note in all the hubbub about them.

Then, on a sudden, through a break in the nearest trees, Carey saw the flaming cross surmounting the church on the other side of the Square. Threading his way among the dodging children, he crossed over to it, and in another moment entered the building next door, which was his hotel.

His dollar-a-day room was little more than a box. The one window faced upon an air-well and a blank wall. In the centre of a white, linen cloth, arranged diagonally upon a spiral-legged table in the middle of the room was a thick red Bible. A cheap bureau flanked the bed, and on the other side stood a wash stand with basin and ewer and slop-jar. A couple of red upholstered chairs with somewhat ragged fringe and sagging seats hugged the wall opposite the bed. Above these in gilt frames of ornate scroll

work, hung two photgraveurs which at some time had been irreparably damaged by dampness. The frames were tarnished and the heavy paper which supported the pictures had commenced to buckle; long, curving furrows ran across them like arrested ripples of a pond. One of these pictures represented a girl in a riding habit, her crop tucked beneath her arm, feeding an apple to her horse; it was entitled "Thoroughbreds." The other showed the shrinking forms of a pair of fair-haired lads in doublet and hose and bore the legend in flowing script: "The Princes in the Tower." The room was unfriendly, comfortless and cheerless. It reflected the entire atmosphere of the hotel, which, from the groups of elderly ladies gathered in the main hall downstairs, to the doors of the creeping elevator which swung outward, impressed Carey more as a large boarding house.

It was too early to go to bed, although he was tired. He wanted a bath, but he had no idea where the bath room was, and he disliked the fuss of ringing for a boy and soap and towels. It would have embarrassed him; he decided to wait until he felt more at home. Partially unpacking his suitcase, he got out a pad of paper and his fountain pen, and began a long letter to his mother.

As he wrote, the sense of his own friendlessness and loneliness returned to him. His room was dreary and depressing. The elevator, across the corridor, began its slow ascent with a muffled whine that gradually mounted the octave, abruptly ceasing when the car came to a standstill. From the air-well rose the smell of boiling clothes and shrill voices of servants below. But, ever persistent, dominating all other noises, prevailed the distant murmur from the Square, punctuated occasionally by some child's sharp scream.

At ten minutes to twelve, Carey woke suddenly to find his head lying upon the sheets of his unfinished letter, his fountain pen still gripped between his fingers. He undressed hurriedly, struggling against his drowsiness, turned off the electric light, and crawled into bed. The light from the room directly above his own, thrown against the side of the air-well opposite his window, was reflected again on the wall beside his bed, quivering and ghostly. The elevator in the hotel recommenced its whine. It stopped at his floor, and some people passed down the corridor, laughing. They paused almost beside his room. There was an interchange of "good-nights," and a final "Hope you sleep well." A door shut; a receding murmur of footsteps and voices. Then abruptly a knob rattled,—some one stepped out into the hall.

"Mrs. Striker! Here's your music . . . satisfactory . . . his enunciation . . ."

A man answered:

"Oh, thank you. That's the fourth time . . . Well, you're very kind . . . good-night!"

Carey thought of New York, of his strange surroundings, of the place where he had hidden his money, and fell asleep.

CHAPTER II

CAREY was in his twenty-fourth year when he came to New York. He appeared a year or so younger on account of the fairness of his hair and the clear freshness of his skin. He had the Teutonic colouring, although no one could have mistaken his Americanism. His bright yellow hair, which he always wore close-cropped, had a tendency to curl and cling to his head in a series of tiny waves. His eyes, of a somewhat sombre blue, were well placed on either side of a straight nose. Beneath the eyebrows, which were long and ended in an upward tilt, the flesh formed a firm, round cushion like the ball of a thumb beneath the skin. This had the effect of making his face appear heavy and unresponsive, and would have been a serious handicap had it not been for the ingratiating quality of his smile. His mouth was large and sensitive, and, when he smiled, it was like the grin of a school-boy, both appealing and full of charm. Two sharply indicated parentheses in either cheek were the result of this ready expression of good humour and amusement. The most noticeable qualities of his face were his prominent cheek-bones, like those of a young Indian, and his high colour which varied rarely. He was of medium height, with rather a narrow chest, and weighed a little over a hundred and fifty pounds.

He was born in a western city that boasted a quarter of a million inhabitants. His parents had moved there a few years before his birth, as his father's health demanded a mild climate. There was a considerable disparity between his parents' ages. In after years he was often to wonder what strange attraction had drawn them together. His father was a man of affairs, a man of the world, a musician, a *connoisseur* of art. Moreover, he was rich. Carey's home, for the early part of his life, had been one of luxury.

His mother, on the other hand, twenty years her husband's junior, was shy and retiring, extremely domestic and deeply religious. Almost from his birth, Carey's mother was haunted by the fear that her son was doomed to fill a drunkard's grave. There was not the slightest ground for her apprehension. While Virgil Williams drank an occasional glass of wine, or even something stronger when the occasion arose, Carey had never seen his father when the slightest suspicion could have been aroused as to his sobriety. There was no accounting for his mother's dread of her son's acquiring the taste for liquor. It formed the theme of the greater part of her morning and nightly prayers. At times, particularly on Sunday afternoons, she would entice Carey into a quiet corner of the home, cut off, by carefully planned manœuvring, every means of escape, and then plead with him to withstand the evils of the Demon Rum. Impressed with the danger of drawing too tight a rein, she occasionally permitted the appearance of beer upon the table on the excuse that a Welsh rarebit afforded; and a decanter, half-filled with grocer's claret upon the side-board in the dining room, bore evidence, so she told herself, to her open-mindedness on the subject. But Carey invariably noticed her apprehensive eyes upon him as he

drank his glass of beer, and once, coming suddenly upon her at the sideboard, he found her holding the claret decanter to the light, comparing the height of the liquor with the impression left by some previous inspection.

There was little ground of mutual interest upon which his parents could meet. His mother's taste in literature ran to such books as *Rose Mather*, *Happy-go-lucky*, *The Woman in White*, *Won by Waiting*, *The Heir of Redclyffe* and the novels of E. P. Roe. She thought "those pretty tunes from *Trovatore* and *Traviata* very pleasing." The Wedding March from *Lohengrin*—the last syllable of which she pronounced to rhyme with *Rhine*—and Schubert's "Serenade" were among her favourites in music. Curiously, while she, by comparison, cared little for either books or music, she found a great deal of pleasure in pictures. The consummate masterpiece of the world's art for her was the painting by Sir Edwin Landseer entitled *A Distinguished Member of the Humane Society*, representing a great Newfoundland dog lying upon a stone pier, his forepaws resting complacently upon the curbing, his head erect, his eyes looking placidly out of the picture. A fine steel engraving of this work of art hung above the coal grate in her room, and Carey often found his mother, with arms resting upon the mantel beneath, gazing absorbedly at it, unheeding of his presence, lost in reverie.

"Was there ever so noble a look upon a man's face, Carey?" Mrs. Williams would ask him. "There must be a place in Heaven for such dogs as that."

Mr. Williams regarded his wife's ideas on art, music and literature with amused tolerance. Carey was not aware of it at the time, but years afterwards he came to realise that his father, appreciating the gulf between his own mind and his wife's, had long since ceased to

attempt to bridge it. Virgil Williams was a man of culture, a university graduate, a man who had travelled extensively. As he grew on in years, travelling became his greatest source of amusement. He took little interest in Carey. At a very early age, the boy could remember that once his father had swung him to his shoulder and marched about the library table singing:

"I'm Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines,
I feed my horse on corn and beans."

But this was one of the very few occasions when his father had shown him affection. Of thrashings and punishments there had been many, but, in justice to Virgil Williams, let it be said that these had not been severe. His son irritated him. He was noisy and obstreperous; he rattled the silverware at the table; he talked continually. The father suffered from dyspepsia and often came home with a severe headache. Frequently he did not come home until after Carey had gone to bed. He dined at his club or with friends. As Carey grew older, his father came home to dinner less and less often. But, once or twice a week, Williams Senior, seized with one of his terrible headaches, drove up to his door in a coupé and was helped upstairs and into bed by the hackman and the butler. Then it was that Mrs. Williams made up to her husband for the many times she exasperated and wearied him. Kneeling by the great walnut bed in the darkened guest-room beside the gaunt figure stretched out immovable beneath the sheet, she wrung out the ice-cold cloths from the huge silver-plated pitcher in which the ice rattled and clinked, and placed the dripping, cold compresses one after another upon his burning forehead at minute intervals.

At such times, Carey knew the safest place for him was outside the house. No noise of any kind, not even a footfall or spoken word, must disturb the sick man.

Once the boy had come home late, and had entered the house not knowing his father had returned before him, carried up to bed, blind with pain. Carey romped through the hall, flung his school books into the hall closet, banged the door, and came up the stairs two at a time. He never forgot the towering figure, clad in the white, scant nightgown, that met him at the head of the stairs. The hollow sockets beneath the contracted brows in which his father's eyes leaped as tiny flames, the drawn cheeks, the dripping grey hair, the clawlike hands, one caught at the opening of the nightshirt, the other clutching the ice cloth, and his mother's shrinking figure cowering behind, left an ineradicable impression upon his mind. The utter terror that possessed him at the moment forever left its mark upon him. Thereafter, if suddenly he came upon his father, or was surprised by him at some unexpected meeting, he could not control the start or the succeeding shudder that seized him. His father saw that his son shrank from him at such times, and it annoyed and angered him.

And yet Carey was not without a feeling of affection for his father. Mr. Williams provided for the boy generously. He was sent to the best schools; he had a discriminating music teacher; even a physical instructor was engaged for a time. It was as if the man, realising his lack of interest in his son, sought to make up to him in such material advantages.

Before he moved to the West, Virgil Williams had amassed a considerable fortune. He had the instincts of the financier. If business or profession he had, it was that of a promoter. His reputation in this respect was

considerable. The majority of his investments justified his faith in them. When he gambled, he did so knowingly and conservatively. All his dealings had been with inconsiderable amounts, and yet the aggregate of his profits made a respectable total. He married when he was forty, and felt that he could retire at forty-three. It was with this in mind that he had gone West. But the man failed to understand his own nature. He found that he could not settle down to a life of leisure. He began to dabble in a half-interested way in local real estate. Then Carey was born, and the father took a six months' trip to Europe, leaving the baby and his young wife at home.

It must have been upon his return that Virgil Williams began to realise that he had outgrown his wife. A passionate music-lover himself, and a pianist of no small attainment, he failed utterly to awake in his wife any interest in Bach, Beethoven or the music dramas of Wagner. During the winter following his European trip, he made a flying visit to New York for the concerts and opera. Thereafter, this visit became an annual affair, which stretched from weeks into months. He never took Carey's mother with him.

In addition to his awakened interest in music, Virgil Williams brought home with him from Europe some very fine *Piranese* etchings and an excellent copy of Greuze's *Cruche Cassée*, together with many exceptional photographs of the old masters' work. But his wife had no appreciation for them, and most of the etchings he gave to his friends. The *Cruche Cassée* he presented to his club. On his subsequent trips to Europe he never again brought back anything to beautify his home.

On more than one occasion, before his departure, he

had urged his wife to accompany him. But Mrs. Williams felt his dissatisfaction with her and the boy, and pleaded her own health or Carey's schooling as the excuse to remain at home.

When Carey was twelve years old, his father went on a trip around the world. He was gone for over a year, and during this time the boy was aware of a subtle change that came over his mother. He knew, in some vague way, that she was unhappy. Occasionally he found her in tears, reading over the letters that irregularly arrived from his father. But she never took her son into her confidence. The boy, however, felt she was depressed with a growing anxiety, and he was troubled.

Suddenly, without further warning, the catastrophe he instinctively felt to be impending overtook them.

A lawyer, with full power-of-attorney, arrived from New York, with instructions from Virgil Williams to sell all the real estate holdings that he owned in their city, including the homestead. Mrs. Williams, frightened and beside herself with the conflicting advice of many friends, engaged a local firm of attorneys. An injunction was procured in time to prevent the sale, but no explanation was forthcoming from Virgil Williams, who had returned to America and was living in New York.

Events succeeded one another rapidly—too rapidly for Carey to follow with any adequate comprehension of their meaning. His father brought suit for divorce on the absurd ground of desertion. His mother hid herself in the house of a friend and so frustrated the efforts of the process-servers. After much misgiving, and driven to the necessity of taking some action by the cessation of all her income, Mrs. Williams brought a counter suit for divorce, which her husband allowed to go by default. Provision for the wife and son was made by deeding all

the property in the western city to Mrs. Williams and making a cash settlement of ten thousand dollars.

Two months later, his mother told Carey that the day after the divorce was granted his father had remarried.

It was about this time that Carey began to develop a great desire to become an artist. His mother's income having been cut in half, the necessity of his doing something to earn a living became immediately apparent. The home was sold, and his mother bought a smaller house in which they began their life under the new conditions. But these first years were not happy for either of them. Mrs. Williams brooded over her husband's alienation and grew bitter. Carey accepted the situation with youth's indifference. His father had been at home so little, it did not matter whether he stayed away altogether. He could not sympathise with his mother's resentment of the wrong that had been done herself and son or with her offended pride. He could not share her opinion of his father's selfishness. She knew her husband's weaknesses and the more she reflected upon the ease with which he had escaped from a situation that was distasteful to him, the more indignant and incensed she became. In the distressed state of her mind, her early fear of her son becoming a drunkard returned to harass and terrify her. She nagged Carey accordingly and he, insensible to the bitterness and sorrow that lay heavy at her heart, grew sullen and ill-tempered.

Their income, which at first had been ample for their needs, soon began to decrease owing to bad investments and mismanagement. At the end of his second year at the high school, Carey finally prevailed upon his mother to let him take a course in the Art School affiliated with the neighbouring university.

He soon began to justify the wisdom of this step. At the end of a year, he was one of the most promising students in the school, and was singled out to form one of a special class of ten or so to take individual instruction in colour work under Klaus Gustav Eschen, a landscape painter of considerable reputation and quite the biggest man in art matters in their community. Professor Eschen took a genuine liking to Carey and, perhaps because of the boy's sunny disposition, perhaps because of his earnestness and ability, laboured with him more than he did with the others.

It was on the summer sketching trip that followed the close of the first year's work that Carey made a friend of Joe Downer. The sketching class was composed of about eighteen of the Art School's students who could afford the time and the expense. Of their number, eleven were women, and these, for the most part, were what Carey described as elderly. Certainly, the youngest were two sisters who, generously speaking, must have been nearing the thirties. Of the men, three were married and two were deaf and dumb, which threw the remaining pair into one another's constant society. Perhaps this was the only way they could ever have become friends, for Joe Downer was seven years Carey's senior, a silent, gentle sort of person, conscientious to an irritating degree, slow, shy, and sensitive as a child. They returned from this trip sworn friends, and Joe thereafter became Carey's blind and abject slave. He conceived a dumb and unswerving affection for the boy that was almost sublime in its unselfish devotion. Carey soon accepted it as a matter of course, and imposed upon Joe's kindness at times, often hurting his friend's sensitive feelings cruelly. But Carey was not aware of this. Joe did not know how to reproach him, even if he had wished to do so.

It was Joe's praise and admiration for Carey's work that led the boy to drop out of the Art School and go to work, free-lancing. Joe believed firmly that Carey's future was to be that of a great artist. A sketch, an idle note for a composition, a dog's outline upon a scrap of paper, discarded by Carey or tossed into a waste-paper basket, would be stealthily recovered and reverently pasted in a scrap-book kept for that purpose. Old Professor Eschen pleaded in vain with Carey to finish the course. Every one of his instructors, even his mother, added their arguments. Carey was obdurate. He told them he didn't want to be a painter or an "artist"; it was his ambition to become an illustrator. He pored over the magazines, knew the names of most of the illustrators, and referred to them glibly. Three huge portfolios, crammed with the pictures he admired, bore witness to his interest in this line of his profession. He made a frieze about his room with the posters by Edward Dangerfield and Perry Maxwell and other artists that leading monthly magazines had issued within the past few years, and he would go almost any length to add to his collection. His proudest possessions were an original pen and ink sketch by Castle Jerome, one of the most prominent illustrators of the day, which had appeared in a comic weekly, and another of President Roosevelt by a famous cartoonist.

The determining factor which led Carey finally to take the step he had so long discussed with Joe Downer was the winning of a contest for the best poster advertising the State Fair. The prize was two hundred and fifty dollars; but it was not so much the money that mattered as the prestige his success brought him. His photograph was published in the three local newspapers, and he was at once elected to the Pen and Brush Club, an exclusive

organisation composed of the best writers and artists in the city. He became its youngest member.

Joe Downer had a studio in which he lived as well as worked, and he suggested they should share this. Carey accepted his offer, although he continued to live at home with his mother. Downer's income consisted of fifty dollars a month, paid to him from his father's insurance, and whatever else he could earn from work with local advertisers. It was meagre enough; but Joe was thrifty, and managed to get along comfortably.

Carey was nearly nineteen when he launched out for himself. For the first three months he worked with a passionate devotion, determined to show his mother and his instructors at the Art School that he had not been over-confident. In that time he finished three magazine covers and drew a dozen pen-and-ink sketches, illustrating his own jokes, which he sent East. He competed in a poster contest for a cash prize offered by a cereal manufacturer, and submitted a water-colour sketch for the cover of a booklet to the advertising manager of the great railroad which had its general offices in his own city. At the end of three months, his covers and sketches were all returned, and his poster in the cereal contest was lost in the office of the manufacturer. He never obtained the slightest satisfaction for it. But the advertising manager of the railroad company wrote him to come and see him, and offered him twenty-five dollars a week to illustrate the booklets and folders issued by the Passenger Department of the railroad.

The General Passenger Agent had noticed Carey's poster for the State Fair, and had spoken about it to the Advertising Manager as the kind of thing he liked, pointing it out with his stick one day when he and the Advertising Manager were going to lunch together. It

was to that slight incident Carey owed the offer. He accepted it gladly and went proudly home to tell Joe and his mother about it. A hundred dollars a month seemed a great deal of money to him; he had never had so much to spend before, and he felt that life was easy and the world a simple thing to bring humbly to his feet.

But he paid dearly for this mistake. In accepting the offer from the railroad, he forged about his hands and feet shackles that soon began to gall and chafe him. Within a year they seemed to be unendurable; but it took four years of unhappiness, discouragement and self-disgust to shake them off.

He never liked to look back upon this period of his life. His work with the railroad lost its zest within two months after he had undertaken it. It required little artistic ability, little work and little thought. It soon became a source of easy income—and nothing more. He had no definite hours, and would drop in at the offices of the railroad only when he was summoned. The result was that he never rose from his bed until after nine in the morning, and most of his time, when he was not working in Joe's studio, was spent at the Pen and Brush Club playing poker, drinking, and associating with other idlers like himself.

It was Joe's devotion that kept Carey free from contamination during this period. There were times when there would be serious talk between the two, and Carey would not go near the Club for a week; but he was very young, extremely popular, and the attraction was strong.

The worst result to Carey at this time was the dwindling of his ambition. It became dormant. He no longer wanted to become an illustrator. The desire for creation left him. He was in a rut, and he didn't care enough to get out of it. In a vague, indefinite fashion, he longed

to break away and begin to paint and draw again as he had when he was at the Art School—but he did not know how to go about it. He took refuge in blaming the lack of opportunity in their western city. No one really knew anything about art there—the illustrator's art—*his* kind of art. New York was the place! There brains and ability were recognised! He wanted to go to New York and, at the end of his second year with the railroad, he announced to every one that he was going. He even got so far as to set a date; but it was postponed, and again postponed, and another year slipped by before he knew it. Carey would often sit back from his drawing board—on which there might be a sketch of a Pullman porter deferentially aiding a passenger with his luggage—to find Joe Downer gazing at him, troubled and anxious, his grey eyes full of affection and concern. Joe never reproached him or upbraided him. Carey told himself he would have minded it much less if he had. The incident that brought Carey to his senses was much more effective than anything Joe could have said or done.

On a certain New Year's Eve, after Carey had been with the railroad for nearly four years, he had the disagreeable experience of being arrested. He unquestionably had drunk much more champagne than he should, and that complicated the matter. He had been dining with a number of the younger members of the Pen and Brush Club at a popular restaurant, where they had engaged a table for some time in advance. Their party had been noisy and conspicuous, and the manager of the place had twice requested them to be less obstreperous. Carey's offence was not serious. Wandering among the crowded tables, speaking to one group of friends after another, he stopped before a couple—an old man and his daughter—bowed and smiled and, picking up the lady's

champagne glass, drained it and broke the stem of it in two.

The old gentleman failed to understand the tribute. He promptly knocked Carey down. A disorderly scene followed. Carey's club mates rushed to his assistance, and a waiter who attempted to interfere was knocked to the floor in turn. A mad, free-for-all fight ensued between waiters and clubmen, tables were overturned, glass and chinaware broken, mirrors smashed. Abruptly the police appeared, swinging their clubs, and the fight was over. Carey, dragged out from beneath the general debris by a gigantic policeman, was hustled with the rest of his friends through a fast-gathering and staring crowd into the waiting patrol wagon and locked up in the station house on the charge of "drunken and disorderly conduct." Two hours later, Joe arrived and bailed him out. He did not appear in court when the case was called, purposely forfeiting his bail—and the incident was seemingly closed.

But the two hours in the police pen opened Carey's eyes. His remorse was so acute that Joe's heart ached for him. Fortunately, Mrs. Williams never heard about the affair, and it got to the ears of very few of Carey's friends. But, to the boy, this made little difference.

His first act toward regeneration was his prompt resignation from the Pen and Brush Club; his second, leaving his mother's house for a time and going to live with Joe. For the four months following, he worked hard and determinedly. He was seriously in debt, but Joe taught him how to save and, by the end of that time, he had paid all he owed. Without waiting for further developments, he borrowed two hundred dollars from Joe, and decided to take the plunge and try his luck in New York. Four months had worn out his patience and

endurance. He had lived the life of self-denial and self-restraint as long as he was able, and it was more his distrust of himself, his fear of returning to his old habits and associates, than the desire to satisfy his ambition, that finally drove him to accept Joe's proffered loan and make the break. His mother could not understand his wish to get away, and reproached him for what she described as "want of heart." She felt he was too young to withstand the temptations to vice in New York, and threw the responsibility of his going on Joe.

"It's your doing," she said to him with bitterness. "If he comes home a confirmed drunkard, I'll have you to thank for it."

Professor Eschen gave him a letter of introduction to a celebrated portrait painter in New York, and the members of the Pen and Brush Club made his departure the occasion for a farewell dinner. The Advertising Manager of the railroad secured him an employé's pass to New York, and, thus equipped, Carey left home.

CHAPTER III

CAREY presented his letter of introduction to John Seymore Jarvis on the second day after his arrival in New York. Monday he had spent on a Broadway surface car, riding from the Battery almost to Harlem and back. He walked Forty-second Street, and Thirty-fourth and Twenty-third, and had his dinner in a Childs restaurant. In the evening he had bought a seat in the gallery for "The Prince of Pilsen," a comic opera that had been running all winter, and reached his hotel at midnight, utterly fagged out. His most thrilling experience of the day had been when, across one of the unexpected tree-shaded squares, he had caught sight of the gold sign of the Occident Company. Some day he'd sell them a cover design or a picture for their magazine, and some day they'd send for him and ask him to illustrate a serial! He determined to make his first rounds of the magazine offices and show the samples of his work that he had brought with him, just as soon as he was settled. He was on fire to begin.

John Seymore Jarvis' studio was located on the corner of Sixth Avenue and Fifty-seventh Street. Carey had no difficulty in finding it. It was one of a great many *ateliers* that composed a large brick corner building. The side of this building facing Fifty-seventh Street was

broken by a number of tall, wide windows of prisms glass, which threw the precious north light into the farthest corners of the studios. Inside, Carey was reminded of his high school at home, with its uncarpeted floors and wide halls. But the place had a curious atmosphere. There was no room here for shams or dilettantes. It was a place for work—for achievement. However unattractive and barren the halls might be, Carey realised that, on the other side of the closed doors that flanked the echoing corridors, there were many luxurious and beautiful rooms. An open door into one of these suites gave him a glimpse of tapestries, carved oaken furniture and tall candles. A capped and aproned maid was gathering up the mail that had been thrust behind the door-knob and had fallen to the floor. On many of the doors were the names of those who lived in the studio apartments. Carey thought some of these seemed familiar and, just as he had placed his finger on the electric push-button of Apartment 51, on the door of which appeared the name of John Seymore Jarvis, he caught sight of another on the opposite side of the hall that brought a glad smile of recognition to his face. Gregory Shilling—one of the best-known of the magazine illustrators! It was like meeting an old friend. Here, undoubtedly, had been painted many of those pictures whose reproductions he had cut from *East and West* and *Stapleton's* and pasted in his scrap-book at home.

He was standing, still fascinated by the well-known name, when the door before him was jerked open by a grey-bearded man clad in a painter's smock, a huge palette and a bunch of brushes in his left hand.

"Well?" he demanded, impatiently. "What is it?"

For a moment Carey was too embarrassed to utter a word. His hand fumbled in the breast pocket of his coat

and trembled as he picked out Professor Eschen's letter of introduction from the little bundle of envelopes and papers. He handed this to the man and reached for his card-case, trying to focus his mind on doing the correct thing; he felt confused and his fingers were all thumbs. The painter, however, was evidently too preoccupied to notice the boy's embarrassment.

"What is it?" he said again, reading the address on the envelope. His hand being occupied with palette and brushes, he made no attempt to extract the letter.

"It's a letter from Professor Eschen," Carey said. He had found his calling card by this time, but he saw no way of handing it to Mr. Jarvis.

"Eschen—who, Klaus Eschen? What's he want?" The painter stared at the envelope, turning it over to examine the back, in the obvious hope that upon its reverse side he might obtain enlightenment.

Carey thought with sullen indignation afterwards that what he should have said in reply to this was: "Why don't you read it and see!" Instead, his voice failed him utterly for the moment, and he shifted his feet and crumpled the card in his hand. He felt that he was behaving like a school-boy and that Jarvis was hardly to be blamed for his rudeness.

"It's a letter introducing me," he finally blurted out.

"Oh—ah——!" Jarvis examined the envelope again and then looked, as if for the first time, at Carey.

"Well—can you come again? I have a sitter just at present; I can't see you now. You're a friend of Eschen's? A pupil? Well—come and see me to-morrow. There's a lady posing." With a backward movement of his head he indicated his studio, and Carey, through the chink of the door, caught a glimpse of a dias, a woman's figure, a heavy brocaded gown and plumed hat.

"I'm sorry," the painter continued; "but come to-morrow. I'll be glad to see you."

He shut the door in Carey's face.

Carey stood staring blankly at its flat surface for some moments while he strove to control the wave of anger that rose up violently within him. He wanted to fling himself against it and beat it down. Tears welled up into his eyes, tears of outraged pride and bitter resentment; he threw his head far back upon his shoulders, gazing upward at the bare ceiling above him, to keep them from falling. Slowly he walked down to the end of the vacant, echoing hall and stood looking out of the window for some unseeing minutes. Presently, as a sudden determination seized him, he strode down the hall again and stopped in front of the door opposite Apartment 51. There was no bell, but he used the brass knocker and when the door was opened, he asked the servant if Mr. Shilling was in.

In another moment he found himself in a beautiful studio with a high skylight and panelled walls. There were pictures everywhere, framed and unframed, paintings, sketches, charcoal studies, wash drawings, pen and inks. Portfolios bulging to the bursting point with more drawings stood in corners. A lay figure in a Japanese kimono was propped in a chair, an incongruous Civil-war soldier's cap awry upon its head. Beneath the skylight were three windows of leaded diamond panes. One of these was open, casement fashion, and the breeze had blown many loose papers from the window seat upon the floor. In front of the windows were two drawing boards on swivel standards. The top of one of these was tilted vertically, and in its centre was thumb-tacked a piece of galley proof marked in its margin with a heavy blue pencil. A dozen or so cigarette stubs lay among the

scattered papers on the floor, and there was a scent of stale tobacco smoke in the air.

Gregory Shilling was a young man, very much younger than Carey had imagined possible. He was tall, clean shaven, square jawed, with a mop of black hair across his forehead. He wore a smoking jacket and his feet were thrust into moccasins. Carey did not hear his padded footsteps and was not aware that he had entered the room until his warm, friendly voice addressed him.

"Mr. Williams—what can I do for you?"

Carey turned about to find him coming toward him, holding the calling card in his hand, a large calabash pipe gripped in his firm-set mouth. Something in the artist's face gave the boy confidence.

"I—I have been a long admirer of your work, Mr. Shilling," he began falteringly. "My home's out West; I only arrived in New York two days ago. I've come here to break into the illustrator's game, if I can."

He paused, confused. Shilling waited expectantly.

"I've been following your work," the boy continued, "ever since you began in *East and West*. An old professor of mine at the Art School gave me a letter to John Seymore Jarvis, and I called here this afternoon to present it, but—but Mr. Jarvis was busy; he had a sitting."

The memory of his ungracious reception came back to him, and the blood rushed into his face. Abruptly his confidence left him. He was overwhelmed with the sense of the impropriety of having intruded upon Gregory Shilling. He and Jarvis must be close friends. They lived across the hall from one another. What did he expect of Shilling anyway? What was there to be said?

Defiantly he raised his eyes to meet those of the artist.

"He shut the door in my face," he said, angrily. "He

took my letter and told me to come again, as though I was a common pedlar,—a model, perhaps,” he added bitterly. “He didn’t ask me my address. He was very rude and—and very, very unkind.” Carey turned to the casement window to hide the emotion he feared he too plainly revealed.

“Then I saw your name on the door,” he continued, “and I had known of you so long that I felt as though you were a friend, and I had the impulse to come and tell you about it and ask you how a fellow begins. I don’t know another living soul in this whole damned city!”

He heard Shilling gently rapping the ashes out of his pipe and presently the rasp of a match. Then:

“How old are you, Mr. Williams?”

“Twenty-three.”

“Had much experience? I mean—at drawing?”

“Four years with a western railroad. I drew the pictures for their advertisements for them.”

“Commercial stuff—hey?”

“Yes.”

“And you want to be an illustrator?”

“Yes.”

“Do you know how many artists there are in New York City, according to the last United States census?”

He paused a moment to give the statement emphasis.

“Twenty-five thousand.”

Carey didn’t answer. An overwhelming sense of depression came upon him.

“Suppose we sit down, Mr. Williams. I’d like to tell you a few things that may be of help to you.” He indicated an arm-chair beside the drawing board, and Carey sat down. Shilling proceeded to wander about, drawing long inhalations from his calabash pipe.

“Do you know the work of Walter Madison Parke?”

"Yes, sir," said Carey, betraying in his voice his admiration.

"Well, Mr. Williams, he was the greatest illustrator that ever lived. You probably know that as well as I. No one has ever equalled him, and no one is likely to. His death was a great loss to his profession. Twelve years ago I came to New York, just about as you are doing now. I had been on a newspaper out in Indianapolis, and I wanted to do something bigger. I came on here and got a job on one of the New York evening papers. I thought I was the luckiest man alive. At the end of a month they fired me. A friend took me up and introduced me to Parke. I shall never forget what he told me, and I pass it on to you for what it may be worth to you. He said to me: 'My dear boy, the illustrator's art is a profession. No one can expect to win success in it without long, hard work, just the same as in any other profession. A boy who determines to become a physician or a lawyer thinks about it a good many years before he commits himself to one or the other of them. He thinks about his qualifications, his abilities, more particularly he thinks about whether he can afford it. It means four years in a medical college, three years in Berlin, and more study in some big surgeon's office when he returns home. With the lawyer it's the same way. He knows that it will take him eight to ten years before he can possibly make a living out of his work. But your artist! He makes a close copy of one of Charles Hanna Simpson's double-page spreads in *Mirth*, and his maiden aunt says, 'Mercy, Harry's going to be an artist! He ought to study.' And the boy quits school and takes six months or a year in an Art League somewhere, and seven times out of ten he doesn't finish the course; but when he starts in for himself nobody questions his right

to his title of "an artist." He's an artist all right. He can go and solicit manuscripts to illustrate from the magazines as well as the fellow who's been drawing and working and slaving for ten years at his work.' "

"I'm trying to give you the same impression, Mr. Williams," continued Shilling, sitting down beside him, "that Walter Madison Parke gave me. He said, coming close to me like this and putting his hand on my shoulder,—he said, 'Shilling—take my advice—go home, go home to your folks, or, if you will stay here in New York, try breaking cobbles or try to reform the town,—something easy! But, for God's sake, don't try to become an artist.'

"And I did," said Shilling, rising to relight his pipe, "just what, in all probability, you will do: I stuck it out. I refused the advice which I am now passing along to you. But I *worked*. God knows how hard or how long before I made any sort of a go. You won't quit on the strength of what I'm telling you. I'm not very old myself, but youth knows it all and won't take advice, and you probably think you're going to be a wonder—and maybe—perhaps—maybe you will be. But, let me tell you this one thing: If you are finally to make good, you've got to work and work like hell, just as if you decided to be a lawyer or a doctor."

Carey sat still, his eyes fixed on a small brass bowl half full of ashes and burnt ends of cigarettes. He was thinking hard; every word of what Shilling said he knew was the truth. In a halting, unemotional voice, he said, half speaking to himself:

"If they all took your advice and quit—and—and went home again, there wouldn't be any good men left in ten or fifteen years. There wouldn't be very many of 'em at any rate. Some of the fellows who try their luck in New York make good."

"Well, that's the answer," said Gregory Shilling. "I figured it out much the same way a dozen years ago, and I suppose I can say truthfully that I'm one of the men that caught on. You may be another."

"Would you—would you be willing to look at some of my stuff,—some of my drawings?" asked Carey.

Shilling smiled as he shook his head.

"No use," he said kindly. "I know just what they're like. All beginners' work's the same; it's all rotten. Why, the stuff I showed around when I first came here ought to have landed me in jail. I'm sure your work will seem amateurish and clumsy, and I wouldn't tell you it was if you should show it to me, for fear of hurting your feelings. You want to remember that what you need to get measured is your determination, your courage, your capacity for work. Your present ability—whether you've got it in you to be an artist—nobody can tell you that.

"But wait. You ought to be started right. You've got to travel the same route as the rest of us. You've got to make the rounds of the magazines and advertisers' agencies. It will seem useless and hopeless and ridiculous to you before you've done; but that's the only road I know of. There is, however, a lot of lost time, and a word or two may save you six months of wasted energy. Sherman of the Consolidated Press Syndicate is the man who will gladly give you that necessary word. Tell him I sent you. I'll give you a card."

He drew out a tiny drawer from a quaintly carved Japanese chest and picked a card from the box, and scrawled across its face:

"Introducing Mr. Carey Williams."

"Sherman's the man you want to see. He'll give you all the points you need. He's the Art Editor of the

Consolidated; been there from time immemorial, and he knows all the illustrators in the city and all the ropes. He's a wonder.

"Now, I hope I haven't discouraged you, my boy," continued Shilling. "It's a hobby of mine, this business of sending untrained, immature youths to New York who consider themselves qualified to be artists. Why, they don't even know what life is,—let alone what art is. And let me say one thing more to you, Mr. Williams: to be a great artist—whether a painter, a musician, writer or sculptor—you've got to know what life *is*, before you can expect to *depict* it or *interpret* it."

Carey walked back to Washington Square and sat on a bench under the trees and thought about himself and his work and the things that Gregory Shilling had told him, until it was late in the evening. A continuous stream of people passed, children romped about his feet, a fat Italian woman came and sat beside him, gently rolling back and forth a dilapidated perambulator, from whose depths arose an occasional whimper. But Carey neither heard nor saw. He was conscious only of the fact that, had some Gregory Shilling told him these things before he left home, he never would have found the courage to come away, but that now, having taken the step, there was no turning back. He was not afraid that he could not succeed. He believed in himself. Never for a moment did he question his ability to, some day, be as great as Shilling or Jarvis,—it was the length of time, the proportions of the fight, the long, hard road that lay before him, that made him think. It was not of his work or his skill that he had doubts; it was his own self, he, Carey Williams, about whom he had the misgivings. Could he stick it out? Could he keep at it long enough?

His mind went over the same points again and again, round and round in the same circle, like a squirrel in a wheel.

Presently he was aware that his head was aching, and that he had not eaten anything since breakfast. A policeman told him where he would find a Childs restaurant; but, when he reached the place, it was closed. Sick with the persistent pain in his head, he turned into the St. Denis Hotel and sank into one of the comfortable chairs in the café. Then, reckless of what it would cost, he ordered a sirloin steak and a pot of coffee.

CHAPTER IV

THE immediate problem that confronted Carey was where and how cheaply he could live. Of certain facts he was, fortunately, aware. One of these was that the only existence possible for him was in a boarding house. He had fancied, before he left home, that he might get a room somewhere and take his meals in a neighbouring restaurant. He had imagined how such a room would look after he had "fixed it up." In the bottom of his trunk he had brought the magazine posters he had been at such pains to collect, and there was the pen-and-ink original from *Mirth*, and the cartoon of Roosevelt. When he could afford it, he was going to have low bookshelves and a window seat, with a corduroy cushion, built in the room; and there was to be an open fireplace, and a Morris chair and a student's lamp with a green shade.

But for these things, he knew he would have to wait, and, for the present, he must find a boarding house where he could get a room, facing north—a room fair enough in size so that he would not be continually colliding with his drawing table,—and three nourishing meals a day. Eating here and there, at irregular hours, and cutting down the food to save a nickel or a dime, he knew had ruined stronger constitutions than his. He had Joe Downer to thank for this wisdom. Joe had been through the mill and had learned lessons which he had impressed

upon Carey during their talks in the weeks before the boy had left home.

After breakfast at a lunch counter on the morning after his interview with Gregory Shilling, Carey bought the *Herald* and the *Times* and took them back to the hotel. Spreading their advertising pages open on one of the desks in the writing room, he proceeded to mark with his pencil every item that seemed to fit his needs and purse in the columns headed "Boarders Wanted." He cut these out with his pocket-knife when he had finished reading all the ads. and, with a dozen clippings before him, selected those that looked most promising and put the balance in an envelope marked "Thursday." One thing he decided from the outset: he would not live above Forty-second Street or below Washington Square. He knew carfare would be an item, and he wanted also to be as near the heart of the city as possible. He congratulated himself on the rapidity with which he had grasped the lay of the city, the clearness with which he saw his individual needs and what he must do at once towards meeting them. He couldn't understand why any one should go out as far as Harlem to live.

The first address on his list was on the West Side of Gramercy Park. He was enchanted with the quietness and gentility of the locality, the greenness of the trees, the brilliant colouring of the flowers in the carefully kept beds, the high encircling iron fence. He made up his mind to put up with almost any inconvenience a boarding house might present for the sake of living in such a neighbourhood; but he was unprepared to make the sacrifices expected of him. The one single room vacant in the boarding house was little more than a closet on the top floor; it had no windows; a small, square skylight

in the slanting ceiling formed the lid of a square hollow shaft, the upper part glass, the lower wainscoting, which ran through the centre of the tiny room carrying light and air to the bath room on the floor below. For such accommodations with board fifteen dollars a week was demanded. Carey was indignant; he felt affronted. No one with any self-respect could have lived in such a room, and to ask fifteen dollars for it seemed to Carey adding insult to injury.

The next house he visited was on Madison Avenue. There were no single rooms vacant there, and he was advised to try across the street. Here he was shown a hall bedroom a little larger than the closet on Gramercy Park, the one window of which faced the rear of an office building. The light was poor and the rent was again fifteen dollars. Carey had made up his mind that he could not pay more than ten.

His next address was on Irving Place. The house was attractive and room-rent and table board were only twelve dollars a week. The hall room he was shown, however, was very small and the light was easterly. He made a mental note that it was a possibility and told the woman he would call again in the afternoon.

Certain facts were borne in upon him as he walked slowly down the street. It was clear that any house on streets running north and south would give him an east or west light; also it was evident that boarders at the beginning of summer were hard to get and that concessions might be made if he asked for them. He had been told at all of the places he visited that in two or three weeks there would be plenty of rooms vacant, and if he would enquire again at that time, he might be better suited.

He stopped on the corner and began sorting over the

remaining clippings in the envelope. There was no other address in that locality, and, uncertainly, Carey turned towards Union Square, half inclined to wait until the afternoon before pursuing his quest. Glancing down toward Third Avenue as he crossed Sixteenth Street, he was struck with the brave and staunch loyalty with which the prim little houses on both sides of the street seemed to stand together, beleaguered by gigantic and encroaching office buildings, pressing upon them from every side. Somehow these valiant little houses, with their bright brick fronts, suddenly suggested to Carey that a boarder might not be unwelcome. He might even find a private family that would be glad to take him in. He slipped the envelope with the clippings into his pocket and walked briskly down the cross street.

The first house that looked possible bore no sign, but, in the window of the one adjacent, there was a little oblong placard: "Boarders." He was about to climb its steps, when an old negro, in shirt sleeves and with a spotty apron tied about his waist, came out in the area-way and began to sweep up a litter of ashes that dirtied the flagging close to the side gate. Carey glanced up at the house. It was three windows wide and, counting the basement, four stories high. As he stood gazing at its noncommittal façade, the door opened and a boy about his own age, sleek and smartly dressed, ran lightly down the steps, and went whistling up the street. There was something attractive about the way he swung his shoulders from side to side to suit his rapid gait.

Carey turned to the old negro:

"Do you think the family—the lady of the house, would be offended if I should ask her to take me as a boarder?"

The man straightened up, and a look of suspicion came into his face. He gazed at Carey, eyeing him over.

"How's dat, suh?" he said, as if he hadn't heard. Carey repeated his question.

Something still puzzled the other.

"Dis is a boar'din' house, suh!" he answered finally. "Was you lookin' fo' room an' boar'd?"

Carey nodded.

"Jes' please excuse me, suh; I'll go tell Mrs. Fillmore. You jes' go right up th' stairs an' ring th' bell." He disappeared hurriedly through the iron grilled gate beneath the steps and presently opened the door for Carey on the landing above.

"Mrs. Fillmore is not feelin' ve'y well, suh. Miss Watt will see you. Jes' step right in th' parlour."

The room into which Carey was shown was half in darkness in spite of the brilliant June sunshine in the street. Heavy hangings at the windows and drawn shades kept out the light. It was evident it was seldom entered. From the centre of a very high ceiling was suspended an enormous ornate chandelier, twinkling, even in the darkened room, with hundreds of dangling glass prisms. Folding doors shut off the adjoining room. An old-fashioned davenport was backed up against these, and on one side stood a closed harmonium, balanced opposite by a tall cabinet whose shelves were covered with ornaments: shells, souvenir boxes, glass plates, china figures, and vases of all sizes and shapes. Of the rest of the room Carey got a fleeting impression of marble-topped tables with more vases and books neatly arranged thereon, heavily upholstered chairs with squares of lace pinned carefully to their backs, and numberless pictures in massive gold frames suspended from the high picture moulding above them. The thing that interested him most was the fact that the door from the hall—a door

unusually wide and unusually thick—was made of one solid piece of mahogany.

The opportunity of investigating further was cut short, for, with much rustling of skirts and ponderous tread, Miss Watt descended upon him. Miss Watt was an exceedingly large woman. She was not fat; she was big and very tall; "rangey" described her. She was dressed in white,—a shirt-waist and duck skirt, stiff with starch, like those of a trained nurse. Her arms were folded, the forearm bare, the fingers of each hand thrust beneath the tight sleeve of the other arm. In the doorway, the light behind her, she looked to Carey like an ogress in *Grimm's Fairy Tales*; but her voice, when she spoke, was pleasant, though loud and shrill.

"Did you want to look at some rooms? My sister, Mrs. Fillmore, isn't well to-day. Could I show you what we have? You're single, I presume?"

Although he could not distinguish her expression, as she stood with her back to the hall light, Carey knew that she was "beaming" at him. Her voice was enough. Nothing could sound more ingratiating.

"Because," continued Miss Watt, "we only want gentlemen. Ladies are too fussy. Will you stay through the summer, or do you want a room just for a few weeks? We have a lovely room on the top floor. I think it's the nicest room in the house, myself. . . . Won't you go right up stairs? . . . I tell Lizzie—my sister, Mrs. Fillmore—that if it weren't for the stairs, I'd rather have that room than any other. It's the coolest in summer. Charley—that's Mrs. Fillmore's son—says he is going to sleep there this summer on hot nights, if it isn't rented. . . . Whew! these stairs do take one's wind!

"Now, this here," Miss Watt paused on the first landing to throw open a door, "is Mr. Vernaught's room.

He's English and's crazy about old things—antiques, you know."

Carey glanced in. The room was spacious, finely proportioned. In spite of the warmth of the day, the embers of a dying fire smoked in the open grate. Over the foot of a wide brass bed were flung the covers. Through the windows at the back, he caught sight of green leaves and brilliant sunshine.

"My sister has the front room on this floor. She's not well to-day. Please go right on up, I prefer to follow, I come so slow. . . . Did you say you wanted a boarding place for the summer, or just for a little while?"

"I'm an artist," answered Carey. "I've just come to New York. I'd like to find a place to stay indefinitely. I've got to have a room that faces north."

"Well, I guess we've got just what you're looking for. Excuse me a minute. I'll see if Mr. Washburn's gone out."

She knocked on a door on the second landing. Somebody shouted, "Yes? What is it?"

"Oh, never mind, Mr. Washburn, I thought maybe you were out——"

The door suddenly opened and a tall, thin man with a sunken, hollow face appeared on the threshold.

"What is it, Miss Watt?"

"Now, now, please excuse me, Mr. Washburn, I didn't dream you were in. I was just showing this young gentleman about."

"Want to come in?" Washburn flung wide the door.

"Oh, no thank you," Carey exclaimed. "Please don't bother." He moved down the hall after Miss Watt. She had already begun to mount the third flight.

"Mr. Durrant and Mr. Lambert have the front room on that floor. I'll show you their room when we come

down. Miss Blanchard—a friend of the family—has the hall bed-room next, facing the street.” Her words now came in gasps. She was utterly winded. “Just a moment. . . .” She waved Carey back. “I—I’ll be all right in a minute. It’s these stairs. . . . I’m not—not used to them. I don’t come up here . . . once a year. . . . Now, here’s your room.”

She pushed back a half-opened door, and Carey, at a glance, decided that it was to be his future home, provided the rent was not impossible. It was bright and a good size. There were two windows facing the street; the light was excellent. The ceiling was low, and had a tilted appearance due to some odd construction of the roof which he found quaint and interesting. There was no fireplace—but a simple marble mantel was set in one wall, and there was a comfortable-looking bed and a wash stand with basin and ewer. There was also a Morris chair, one that might easily have been taken direct from Carey’s dreams.

Miss Watt, silenced through lack of breath, now found her voice again and began to enlarge upon the room’s advantages.

“There’s a lovely bath at the foot of the stairs, and in winter the house is always warm and comfortable. You can have a gas stove——”

But Carey didn’t listen. He stood at the window and vacantly gazed into the street. Some of the things that Gregory Shilling had said came back to him. Was this the place where he could entrench himself against the overwhelming odds that pressed about? Twenty-five thousand artists! Twenty-five thousand who made their living by the same and only means he knew! Could he create the things here that would give him a foothold?

A sparrow lit on the window-sill and jerked its head

about, eyeing his shadow through the glass suspiciously.

"... he's an awful nice man," Miss Watt, ensconced in the Morris chair, was saying. "And then, at the other end of the hall is Mr. Hart. He's a salesman; and next to him is Mr. French and Mr. McNeil. They're with a publishing house. They have the room corresponding to this one at the back of the house. Mr. Blanchard's in between. He's an old man and don't make no more noise than a mouse. Doctor Floherty has the hall room next to this. He's at St. Vincent's Hospital most of the time. You won't be disturbed. There ain't a noisy person in the house."

"And the rent of this room with board?" asked Carey. He dreaded her reply.

"Ten dollars a week." And then, as an afterthought, she added, "in advance."

More to disguise his jubilation than for any other reason, Carey said, mechanically:

"I'm afraid that's more than I expected to pay."

Miss Watt began violently to shake her head and compressed her lips firmly. Then, abruptly, she said:

"Well, if you'll stay right through the summer, I'll make it nine." She smiled at him encouragingly.

Carey's answering smile was involuntary and genuine.

"Very well," he said. "When can I move in?"

"When you please." Miss Watt struggled out of the low seat and got to her feet. "There's generally a deposit——" she began.

"Oh, certainly," said Carey. He handed her nine dollars in bills. "I'll send my trunk over from the hotel this afternoon."

Later in the day, when he arrived in front of his new home, carrying his loaded suitcase, he felt that there was

something very pleasant and friendly about it. Already he was aware of a bond between it and himself. This was where he lived; this was his home. He looked up at the house again, as he had when the smartly-dressed youth had suddenly opened its front door and run lightly down the front steps. It was modest, quiet, unpretentious and home-like. And nine dollars a week seemed too marvellous to be true! He had the same impression when he set his suitcase down in his own room and, out of breath, dropped luxuriously into the comfortable Morris chair. This was something like! Just what he wanted! It would serve admirably for a few months, until he caught on. Then he could look round for a studio. Some day he would have one, with tapestries and carved furniture and tall candlesticks, and old Eschen would give his promising pupils letters of introduction to Carey Williams. In the meantime, his posters would make a very attractive frieze around these walls, and the pen-and-ink original from *Mirth* would look well above the marble mantel, and the cartoon of Roosevelt might hang between the windows.

He flung his suitcase upon the bed, threw back its lid, and began to put his things away.

About half-past five, he heard some of the other boarders come in. Two of them came running up the stairs together. They were laughing, and he heard one animated and high-pitched voice say:

"I wrote down just what he asked me to, and then Miss Hibbard picks up the sheet and screams out so everybody in the office could hear, 'That's the very thing I want to know, Mac!'—and I began to laugh."

A closing door shut off the rest of the words, but Carey

could still hear the murmur of conversation and an occasional burst of laughter.

A few minutes later, there were other feet on the stairs, and a man entered the hall bedroom next to his and shut the door. Carey heard him moving about, opening and shutting drawers, raising the window, going to and fro. Below him, rose the music of a piano; the touch was a professional's. Stirred by the melody, a canary somewhere began to trill shrilly. The house became vibrant with the tread of feet, with noise and movement. Increasingly it teemed with life, vigorous and eager, throbbing to the energy that had swiftly occupied it.

At half-past six, the supper bell rang. The faint tinkle came struggling up through the stair-well, but it was evidently sufficient to answer its purpose. Almost simultaneously, doors opened, the piano ceased, voices arose in the hall, and there came the sound of descending feet upon the stairs. Carey waited a little and followed.

The dining room was in the basement. Half-way down, Carey could hear the raised voices, the rattle of silverware and the clatter of dishes. The house was filled with the hot smell of cooking. He dreaded the ordeal of introductions, but he knew these were inevitable and the sooner gotten over the better. He stifled the impulse to go out and eat his dinner in some restaurant, and in a few minutes found himself on the last flight and standing in the doorway of the brilliantly lighted, overheated room.

In the centre was a large oval table, about which, seated as close to one another as possible, crowded some fifteen people. On the further side an empty chair indicated where the new boarder was to sit. Carey's first impression was that they all seemed uncomfortable,

squeezing together about the table, huddling over their food. Miss Watt's towering figure rose from the end of the table and confronted him. And then the introductions began. Carey nodded and smiled and muttered, "Pleased to meet you," over and over. All the time he was aware that the negro, who had been cleaning up the area-way in the morning and was now clothed in a very spotty dress suit, was standing just behind him balancing three plates of soup, waiting impatiently for the formalities to be over. Presently he found himself beside his own place at table, and there was a general inching of chairs to allow him to squeeze between the flanking diners and draw up. He did not raise his eyes until his soup was finished, and then the man at his left elbow said pleasantly:

"How do you like New York?"

Carey turned about to find he was sitting next to the smartly-dressed youth. The other grinned at him boyishly, and Carey smiled in return.

"My name's Jerry Hart," said the smartly-dressed youth. "In all the hubbub when you came in I guess you didn't get many names. Old Watt's good-hearted, but she's an awful fuss-button."

They spoke in carefully controlled voices; in the general confusion and noisy conversation that prevailed no one could overhear them.

"How did you know I was a stranger here?" asked Carey.

"I saw you this morning, rubbering up at the house when I was going out, and you looked like a Westerner."

"I am," said Carey.

"Well, I'm from California," said Jerry Hart. "I don't suppose you're a native?"

"No," admitted Carey, "I've never been as far West

as that. I was never out of my state till I came East."

"What do you do for a living?"

"Draw."

"Huh!" exclaimed Mr. Hart noncommittally. "I'm just an ordinary, common garden variety. I'm a salesman. I sell graphite."

"What? For pencils?" asked Carey.

"No—grease."

Here their conversation was interrupted by a tall, flabby-faced young man at the end of the table, who had risen to carve the roast beef.

"Do you like your meat well-done or rare, Mr. Williams?"

"And mashed potato?" beamed Miss Watt, whose seat was next. She sat poised with a serving spoon full of vegetable ready to slap it on the plate when it should be passed to her.

A general talk began concerning an organ-grinder who appeared every Saturday morning in front of the house to turn the handle of a decrepit instrument which emitted melodies as superannuated as itself.

"We've been here going on ten years, and he hasn't ever missed a Saturday," said an elderly woman at the head of the table, who, from the fact that she so closely resembled Miss Watt, Carey knew must be Mrs. Fillmore. She was not as large as her sister, but older, and their resemblance was intensified by the fact that they dressed alike, in white, bulging shirt-waists and stiff duck skirts.

"Well, now, I like the hurdy-gurdies," began some one, and Carey, lost sight of in the conversation, took advantage of it to study the different people about him.

The tall, flabby-faced young man, who served at the end of the table opposite Mrs. Fillmore, Carey sur-

mised must be the son, Charley. Miss Watt, digging her long-handled serving spoon vigorously into the white mound before her, sat at his right, while, on his left, a thin, careworn woman, with a carefully cultivated expression of boredom, filled a pile of chipped vegetable dishes with boiled onions. It was easy to infer from their careless indifference to one another that she was Charley Fillmore's wife. Next to her sat an affable old man addressed by the others as Mr. Blanchard. He took a very active part in the talk and spoke, so Carey thought, intelligently and well. It was evident that he was neither a boarder nor a member of the family. His daughter, a girl of twenty-eight or nine, sat next to him. She laughed, violently suppressing her mirth, at almost everything that was said, and was called "Anna" by the Fillmores. No one could have thought her pretty. Her face was disfigured by a large and prominent nose that curved symmetrically outward, terminating in a fat marble-shaped knob, the nostrils being unusually long and narrow. It was a man's nose, ugly and heavy; the powder could not hide the enlarged, dark pores in the skin. But there was a fresh virginal quality to her face that Carey thought very attractive. Her throat, exposed by a collarless shirt-waist, was round and soft, delicately tinted; her hair curled prettily about her ears. Continually she shook with silent laughter, convulsed by a murmur of low asides that Jerry Hart, who sat next her, whispered in her ear.

In the two young men between himself and Mrs. Fillmore, Carey had no difficulty in recognising French and McNeil, who occupied the room at the rear of the house on the same floor as his own. French, who came first, was evidently as much at a loss to know what to say to Carey as Carey was to know how to begin a conversa-

tion with him. He showed his willingness to be friendly, however, by watching out for Carey's wants, filling his glass from the carafe, passing the bread and salt, offering the vinegar and catsup. There was a continual interchange of "Oh, thank you," "You're welcome, I'm sure," between them. Carey noticed that the inside of his first two fingers was darkly stained from cigarettes. French was thin, but McNeil was fat—too fat for so young a man. Apart from mere table courtesies, French did not speak at all; McNeil as little as possible.

On the opposite side of the table were grouped the older men. These were undoubtedly the boarders who supplied the bulk of the revenue; there was a quiet but unmistakable concern for their welfare.

"Charley," Mrs. Fillmore's harsh voice would break into the general discussion, "Mr. Vernaught, I'm sure, would like more of the rare."

Vernaught was the aristocrat of the company. He was English, and there was a subtle air of condescension in his bearing. He rarely joined in the conversation, but listened in aloof silence. So far as Carey observed, the only remark he made during the meal was addressed to McNeil.

"How do you pronounce Lamb's Essays in this country?" he asked. "Do you say, Essays of Eel-ia or Essays of Eli-ah?"

Directly across the table from Carey sat Mr. Durrant and Mr. Lambert. They occupied the room directly underneath his, and it was Mr. Lambert whom he had heard at the piano. He learned these things later. During the first dinner, he was unable to catch either of their names, but he felt fascinated by the older of the two, a dark man, with untidy hair and a decided droop of one of his eyelids. This was Durrant, and it was he that

carried on most of the talk. He spoke easily and authoritatively. Carey decided he liked him best of his new acquaintances. Durrant's roommate was even darker in complexion. His face was olive-hued, long and oval; his eyes warm and luminous like an Italian's. His hands were long, the fingers thin and bony. Throughout the meal, he played nervously with the knives, forks and spoons within reach.

Washburn, who came next, Carey had already met. There was something rather mysterious about his thin face, with the hollows beneath the eyes and the sunken cheeks. A crumb in the corner of his mouth, which persisted in remaining there, annoyed Carey and made him uncomfortable; he could not keep his eyes away from it. Constantly he found himself raising his napkin to wipe his own mouth.

The remaining boarder was Doctor Floherty, who spoke deliberately but with a warm, mellow accent. He was clean shaven, with fine, regular features, and he impressed Carey with a certain quality of refinement the others lacked.

With the dessert, which consisted of corn-starch pudding and black coffee, Vernaught, Lambert and Doctor Floherty excused themselves and departed. Almost all the men began to smoke, French rolling his cigarettes from brown paper and fine-cut tobacco. Charley Fillmore presented Blanchard with a cigar. There was a general edging back from the table when the coffee appeared, the men easing their constrained positions, stretching their legs.

Blanchard was speaking across the table to Durrant, stirring his coffee and inhaling his cigar in long, deep breaths.

"I've lived right here in this town, sir, for fifty-seven

years, and never once have I ever set foot inside of Central Park. Ask Annie—she'll bear me out."

Jerry Hart murmured something in Miss Blanchard's ear. Carey caught the words, "bear him in," and the girl uttered a sort of squeak, but managed to strangle the rest of the laugh in the folds of her napkin. For several following minutes, Carey could see her convulsed shoulders swaying backward and forward on the other side of his neighbour.

Miss Watt, leaning comfortably back in her chair, her large, plump hands resting on her prominent abdomen, regarded the company benignly. Every once in a while, Carey felt her gaze turn upon himself like the glare of a calcium.

French and McNeil, having finished their second helping of cornstarch, were discussing plans for the evening.

Jerry Hart leaned over to whisper in Carey's ear:

"Why don't some one tell Washburn there's a gazelle on the lawn?" he said.

Carey turned a puzzled look at him.

"That crumb he's got there on his lip! We call it a 'gazelle on the lawn' out home. Some one ought to put him wise; it may grow there."

Here Mrs. Fillmore felt it her duty to draw Carey into the conversation.

"Two members of the family you haven't seen yet, Mr. Williams."

Carey wondered where they could possibly sit at meals.

"They're my grandchildren," continued Mrs. Fillmore, "Charley's—my son's children. You'll see them in the morning. They are the prettiest little girls you ever saw, Mr. Williams. Flora and Daisy's their names."

Carey smiled, but couldn't think of anything to say, especially as Jerry Hart kicked him sharply on the ankle.

During an altercation between Durrant and Washburn as to the number of weeks a certain musical show had been playing at a Broadway theatre, Carey could hear Miss Watt arguing the merits of a toilet soap with Charley's wife.

"It costs forty cents a cake, but it lasts four times as long."

"I'm sure it's been on since Washington's birthday, because I took my cousin to the matinée."

"Annie—pass Mr. Williams' cup. You'll have another cup of coffee, Mr. Williams? They're so tiny. Do stop laughing, Annie! Mr. Hart, you must behave. You'll have Annie in hysterics."

"Ever been in Central Park, Mr. Williams? I've lived in this city fifty-seven years, sir, and I've never set foot inside it."

There was something very friendly and pleasant about it all, Carey thought. Most of them might be common, uncouth and even ill-bred, perhaps, but they possessed a general warm-heartedness, a kindly interest and an evident willingness to make him one of them, that was comforting and cheering.

Presently, when they all rose together and went upstairs, Jerry Hart stopped Carey in the front hall.

"Walk over to Fourth Avenue with me," he said, "if you haven't anything better to do. I'm all out of cigarettes."

"My hat's up in my room," Carey explained, "if you'll wait——"

"Oh, hang your bonnet," said the other pleasantly. "It's just a block and a half. Nobody wears a hat in summer."

As the two sauntered down the street together, Jerry Hart began to "put Carey wise," as he expressed it, to

the peculiarities of their fellow boarders and the establishment in general.

"It ain't a swell dump," he said. "But they treat you pretty decently. The house belonged once to some big actor or maybe it was an actress,—I've forgotten. The Fillmores used to have plenty of the long green, but that bum, Charley, blew it all in flyin' in Wall Street. Now he sits round and lets the women feed an' clothe him. He's a mess. Blanchard used to have some cush, too, but Charley got his hooks on it and busted the old man. Now he chops the wood for the kitchen stove and Annie makes the beds. She's not much of a looker,—but she's got a shape like a figure eight, and when it comes to work she certainly is a hummer. There ain't a live one in the bunch but Floherty, and he gets edged if a brewery wagon passes him in the street. Durrant's all right, although he's got the pip; but he certainly can play a swell little game of poker. Say," Hart stopped abruptly and caught Carey's arm, "do you like poker?"

"Oh, I know the game," admitted Carey, "but I like bridge whist better. What's that building down there?"

They reached the corner of Irving Place. Two blocks down, a cross street was a dazzling blaze of light and colour. A steady stream of people passed and repassed. Electric fire signs lapped one upon another. It was like a Midway—a street for seekers of amusement—the main thoroughfare of a city *en fête*. On the corner, a huge, dull brick building sat sphinx-like, possessing some queer quality of dignity in spite of the cheap brilliancy and gaudy colouring that hemmed it about. A sustained and pulsing murmur, like that of a train upon a distant trestle, reached Carey's ears. It was the sound of the shuffling of many thousands of feet and the laughter and voices of a great throng of people moving to and fro.

"That's the Academy of Music," said Jerry Hart, pointing to the dark, silent pile upon the lower corner. "They pull off some fair shows there in winter. It's shut up now."

"Is that the place where Patti and Jenny Lind used to sing?" asked Carey, deeply impressed. "I've heard my father speak about it."

"That's the gilded cage where the birdies used to warble," confirmed his new friend. "Why, my son," he continued patronisingly, "you live in an 'eeristocratic' neighbourhood, let me tell you. Up there's where the guy that wrote—you know—'Rip van Winkle' lived, and round the corner is Tammany Hall, and across the street from that is where Sailor Sharkey hands out the booze. If you buy a quart of wine, Mr. Sharkey will be glad to shake your hand. Up that way is the dear old moth-eaten *Westminster Hotel*. People used to come for miles, long ago, to get their drinks set out to 'em on the marble bar. It was the only marble bar that ever was seen. The *Everett House* is down that way, on Union Square, and it used to be the finest hotel in the city twenty-five years ago. That's the German Theatre over there, and right across the street is that estimable old institution revered by every New Yorker alike—the Consolidated Gas Company."

Carey laughed. Jerry's queer, sophisticated humour amused him.

"I wish we had our hats!" he exclaimed. "You know, I don't know anything about this town at all. I've only been here four days. I don't even know in which direction is the Bowery."

"Well, pin your roll to your suspenders with a strong steel safety pin, and you'll learn. I'm sorry I can't show you the town to-night, but I've got a date with a jinny

at eight sharp, and I've shortly got to be on my way. Let's chase up those cigarettes."

They crossed the street and continued on towards Fourth Avenue, Jerry keeping up a continual flow of conversation for the edification of his eager listener.

"Watt is all right. She's got a good heart, but she can talk you deaf, dumb and blind. They all let on that the house belongs to Mamma Muggins, but Watt's got a half-interest, so if you're ever late with your board, see Wattsey. Mamma Muggins is an old battle-axe."

"Who's Mamma Muggins?" asked Carey.

"Fillmore!" exclaimed the other. "Agnes Anastatia Augusta Fillmore!—Watt's sister. The kids—Charley's blob-faced brats—call her Mamma Muggins. Every one calls her that. She's cream of tartar all right, but Charley dear can help himself to as much as precious pleases every time he wants to blow the boys! They row all the time. We've a pretty good bunch on that top floor. McNeil and French aren't a noisy team, but Mac can tell some swell yarns, and French can sling the ink, so they tell me. He's got a lot of thinks in his bean. My room's next to theirs—the end of the hall. The Doc's the bell-cow, if he lets the grape alone. I don't mind a fellow gettin' a souse, provided he don't make a nuisance of himself to everybody else."

They stopped in front of a cigar store with pool and billiard tables in the rear, bought the cigarettes, and started home again.

"Which one of the fellows is Lambert?" asked Carey.

"He's the dark, Eye-talien looking gink. He's a wiz on the ivories; plays the organ at a big church somewhere up in Harlem. Durrant's in the same room. They've been side-kickers ever since they were kids. Vernaught gives me a pain in the left foot. He sells

antiques on Fifth Avenue. His second cousin was valet to the Earl of Devonshire's mother's half-brother. He thinks he's a damned sight too good for us Americans. 'Hit's a beastly shame, don't-cher-know, that he's got to live in a boardin' 'ouse with a lot of rotters like us! Washburn's in a carriage factory. His old man used to own it, but it's going to bust on account of the automobile business. I tell him he's a chump not to beat 'em to it and make the upper part of the car—you know—the body—and sell it to the guys that make the engines. Well, you'll like it here, I think. There ain't any old maids fussing about with their cough syrups and knitting. You can smoke in the dining-room and come home with a bun on, and as long as you can crawl upstairs without waking the house, nobody gives a damn."

They reached the house and found Anna Blanchard and Charley Fillmore sitting on the steps in the gathering dusk.

"Sparking, I see!" called Jerry Hart when they were near enough. The remark, trivial as it was, was sufficient to convulse the girl, and the thought flashed through Carey's mind: "Is it possible she's in love with him!"

Explaining that he'd be late if he didn't "get a wiggle on," Jerry said good night and disappeared into the house. Carey lingered a moment on the stoop. From the open windows above came the sound of Lambert's piano. Children were playing in the street. White, shapeless forms upon the steps of the houses opposite showed where the women were still sitting enjoying the refreshing coolness of the early summer evening. Occasionally the sound of their voices and laughter floated across the street. A belated delivery wagon rattled up suddenly; one of the boys on the front seat leaped to the street, package in hand, before the horses were pulled up.

Carey flung his cigarette away and turned into the house, calling good night to the two figures on the lower steps. Slowly he began to mount the stairs. The house still retained the odour of dinner. From the basement rose the smell of soaking washing, the clatter of crockery, and the raised voices of the servants, muffled by closed doors. As he passed Lambert's room, he lingered, compelled by the music. It was an intricate composition with poignant melodic harmonies, built one upon another, rising higher and higher, exquisitely beautiful. Abruptly it ended. There followed a moment of vacant silence, the brisk crackle of a newspaper and the matter-of-fact tone of Durrant's voice:

"I see they're going to get the subway really going this fall. That will make it easy for you, Paul."

As he climbed the last flight, Carey caught a glimpse of Jerry Hart, the door of whose room was open, struggling with his dress collar. From McNeil's and French's room came the pat-pat-pat-pat of a typewriter, the "z-ing" of the signal bell and sharp rasp of the returned carriage.

Carey closed his own door behind him. Both windows were wide open, and for a long time he knelt at one of them, leaning out, watching the life of the street below. Then he lit the single gas jet, fitted with a Welsbach burner, drew up a chair to the marble-topped table, and began a long letter to Joe Downer.

CHAPTER V

CAREY'S trunk was not delivered from the hotel until the following morning. He enjoyed unpacking it and putting away his clothes and other belongings in the closet and the drawers of the lop-sided bureau. Most interested was he in examining the sample of his own work which, carefully arranged in a big portfolio, lay at the bottom of his trunk. Some of his larger compositions and his swivel drawing table were to be sent to him by express. He had written to Joe the night before, asking him to ship them on to him at once. Most of the contents of the portfolio were reproductions of his work. Somehow, he felt that in the few days he had been in New York, he had acquired a broader and more critical point of view. During his wanderings about the city the day after his arrival, he had come upon a book store in whose window a certain magazine had a display of its current issue. A number of the original drawings that had been used were exhibited, and these Carey had examined with absorbed attention. One of them was by Gregory Shilling; another, an oil in full colour, by John Cameron Wilson. The latter Carey had admired immensely, marvelling at the way the artist had laid his colour on the canvas and the effect of the painter's bold and reckless technique. He had taken a new interest, too,

in studying the covers of the magazines on the news-stands, and the illustrations in those that he had bought.

As he walked around the streets, he was constantly seeing excellent bits of composition, or a striking face that would make an admirable sketch. A glimpse of a vista down a side street, the effect of silver light from electrics on the foliage of trees, the glowing halos about the street lamps on Fifth Avenue, the indigo-tinted shadows of tall sky-scrapers at high noon, registered themselves upon his mind in flying sequence. He knew these impressions upon his fresh vision were invaluable. He longed to make notes of them.

Never was his creative faculty more active. He was all eagerness to get to work. He felt the possibilities of great achievement.

After he had arranged his few possessions, hung the original drawing from *Mirth* and the cartoon of Roosevelt in the places he had selected for them, he turned to his own work with a strange feeling of curiosity and apprehension. It impressed him as being even worse than he had feared. It seemed to him now the work of a boy, crude and meritless. He put it away grimly and decided not to allow himself to think about it. However bad it might be, it represented so much accomplished, so much that had been reproduced, that had served the purpose with the presumable satisfaction to those who had bought it. On Monday he would set out to put it to the test. He believed it was better than some of the stuff in the magazines. The best he could hope was that it might indicate what he was capable of doing, if only he were given the chance. The Art Editors must be trained critics, and it was not inconceivable that one among them might perceive something in it, might recognise that here was a young artist who had possibilities.

Friday afternoon he spent at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It was a day of the week on which admission is charged, but Carey cheerfully paid the quarter of a dollar and enjoyed the feeling that he was privileged thereby. He also purchased a catalogue, and was among the last to leave the galleries when the closing hour arrived.

He had been looking forward for years to this first visit to the Metropolitan. His feeling as he left the building was more of contempt than disappointment. It was impossible to believe himself lacking in appreciation. The greater part of the paintings were atrociously bad. One did not need to be an expert to see this; it was obvious to the casual visitor with the slightest feeling for beauty of form, colour or composition. But Carey found real inspiration in the two Vermeers and the Franz Hals portraits. He liked some of the Diaz landscapes and the exquisite execution of the Daille and Meissonier military compositions. The Rosa Bonheur *Horsefair* he thought was quite as absurd and badly drawn as he had always considered it to be from the innumerable reproductions he had seen. He believed that Frederick Remington knew a great deal more about the anatomy of the horse than the famous French animal painter. The *Jean d'Arc* of Bastien Le Page he found of interest more from his recent reading of the Bashkirtseff journal than for any particular appeal in the picture itself. It was not that these paintings—some of them at least—were not works of art worthy to find a place in such a gallery. He supposed they were all very fine in their way; but they seemed remote, lacking in power to make him stand before them and feel the tightening of his heart and the prick of tears back of his eyes, the physical effect that great art—whether on canvas, the printed page, or

the stage—invariably produced upon him when, as he expressed it, “it got over.” The Franz Hals and the Vermeers had done this; but the rest left him cold and unmoved.

Perhaps what he saw that most affected him during the afternoon was a group of four old men and three women with their easels arranged as close together as possible, crowding about the painting of *The Storm*, by Pierre Auguste Cot, popularly known as *Paul and Virginia*, each one making a hasty copy of it. Carey watched them for a time. They were not interested in each other’s work; they spoke no word among themselves; occasionally one of them would glance up at the great glass skylight above and look anxiously at a watch. Carey saw that all of them were racing with the fading light. He spoke to an attendant in the gallery.

“They sell their copies to art dealers,” the man explained. “That picture is more in demand than any other. There’s always a lot of ’em copying it. Seven’s all that can get round it. There were three more here this morning, and one of ’em had a scrap with that bald-headed chap over there. I had to interfere. The bald-headed chap was here first, so I told the other fellow to go about his business.”

“What do they get for their copies? What do they sell them for?” Carey asked.

“Oh, they’re lucky if they get ten dollars apiece for ’em. Some get only a couple of dollars.”

“Two dollars!” cried Carey, astonished. “Why, I can’t believe it! What do the dealers do with them?”

“They sell them to different people. They frame ’em up nice, in big gold frames, and put ’em in a wooden box with a glass face, and they get fifty dollars, or maybe

seventy-five apiece for 'em. Saloons and hotels sometimes order quite a number at a time."

Carey turned away sick at heart. He watched the old men and women for some time, fascinated by their intense faces bending ever nearer and nearer to their canvases with the dimming light. They had copied this picture a score of times and knew just how to mix their colours, just what to leave to finish up at home, just where they must give close attention to the original. The thought persisted in Carey's mind: perhaps they, too, planned to be great artists when they left home, young men and young women, to come to New York to do big things. Perhaps he would be among their number when he was fifty years old, selling his copies to a local art dealer for two dollars apiece!

In the evening, he and Jerry Hart went to see *The Wizard of Oz* at the new Majestic Theatre. They occupied gallery seats, and afterwards visited a German restaurant, where Carey drank more imported beer than was good for him. The next morning he spent riding on top of a Fifth Avenue bus, and in the afternoon he took a long walk down through the Bowery and half way across the East River on the Brooklyn Bridge.

On Sunday he went to church. Anna Blanchard taught a class in the Sunday School of St. George's Church. She was enthusiastic about the minister, and finally persuaded Carey to accompany her to eleven o'clock service. But he dozed through most of the sermon and was greatly disturbed for fear she noticed it. If she did, she said nothing about it, and Carey soon found himself mechanically repeating to her some of her own phrases in praise of her idol. In the afternoon, he walked out to Central Park, wandered about the

drives and up the Mall, hung for a long time over a parapet looking down on the fountains and the lagoon, on which the first hired rowboats of the season were gliding here and there, the young man at the oars, invariably in his shirt sleeves, a handkerchief tied about his neck, the girl in the stern with parasol carefully arranged with regard to the sun, one hand carelessly trailing in the water. Endless lines of carriages and motors passed each other continuously along the driveway, while on the walks baby buggies, standing beside the benches where their attendants rested, impeded the progress of the pedestrians. From the Casino, now and then came the faint whine of a string orchestra in the café. Everywhere rose the shrill cries of children.

Toward five o'clock, Carey turned homeward. He walked all the way, drinking in what he saw, absorbed and fascinated.

Work began in earnest for Carey on Monday. At nine-thirty in the morning, he presented himself with his portfolio under his arm at the offices of the Consolidated Press Syndicate, and sent in Gregory Shilling's card of introduction to Mr. Sherman. He was presently told that Mr. Sherman would see him in a few minutes. Carey sat down on a long, wicker, cushioned seat in the outer office and waited. There was something thrilling about the sharp bustle of a great magazine office on a Monday morning. Office boys were continually coming and going, proofs of advertisements in their hands, packages of envelopes, wire baskets full of fresh mail. The wicket gate in the railing that divided the outer office banged back and forth with a continual stream of hurrying clerks and boys. The operator at the switch board, near which Carey sat, was working with lightning

rapidity, pulling out plugs, inserting them, pressing the ivory buttons, disentangling the cords, flipping up the little brass indicators that were constantly dropping down, while all the time she kept up a constant murmur.

"Cortland 7821—they're busy, Mr. Reinhardt. Who do you want? Just a minute, please. *This* is the Consolidated Press. Who do you want to speak to? That was the wrong number you gave me, Central. Mr. Bigelow's not in yet. I'll give you his secretary. I can't get them, Mr. Evans, they don't answer."

Suddenly a large man with a heavy jaw and very black moustache appeared in the doorway. His round horn spectacles were pushed up on his bald forehead; in his hand he held the business card of a salesman who was waiting on the other side of the wicket gate. His voice was thick and guttural.

"I told you, sir, that I won't have anything to do with you or your people. The last two deliveries were short, and I don't propose to do business with your kind of firm. I don't employ girls to count envelopes. They're here to *address* 'em; not *count* 'em. You'll oblige me by not coming here again."

He tore the card he held into four pieces and threw it into a waste basket, and turned on his heel. The salesman flushed; he stood a moment with a glassy, unseeing look in his eyes; then slowly he faced the heavy glass door behind him, swung it open, and went out.

Carey waited. With the return of every boy from the inner offices, he looked up expectantly. But no one paid him any attention. Presently another artist came in and asked for Mr. Sherman. He carried two large canvases, bound together by a shawl strap, their painted surfaces held apart by wooden pegs. Almost immediately he was requested to step into Mr. Sherman's office. Ten min-

utes later he came out, rolling up the shawl strap, casting a curious glance at Carey and his portfolio.

Another half hour went by. In a lull at the switch-board, the operator suddenly turned round to Carey:

"Were you waiting to see Mr. Sherman?"

Carey, startled, nodded and smiled.

"I guess he's forgotten all about you," she said.

She slipped in a plug and pressed a button.

"There's an artist out here that's been waiting an hour to see you. Do you want him to come again?" She turned almost immediately to Carey. "He says for you to come right in. I'm sorry," she continued kindly. "You were so quiet, I forgot about you, myself. I generally have to jog his memory. He's all the time forgetting. It's the last door on the right—down that hall."

Carey presently found himself standing in the doorway of a small, disorderly office, the greater part of which was occupied by a great roll-top desk. A row of shelves along one side of the room was filled with magazines in untidy piles. On the wall beside the desk was stretched a great square of green baize, to which proofs of half-tones and colour reproductions were pinned. Against the wall beneath it, leaned the two large canvases that had just been delivered. The room was close and the air was heavy with odour of strong cigars.

The man at the desk wheeled about as Carey appeared in the doorway. He held out his hand cordially:

"You must excuse me, Mr. Williams; I confess I forgot you were waiting. Your card," he indicated where it had been rescued from the litter on his desk, "got mixed up with my papers. Monday morning," he waved his hands deprecatingly, "Monday morning usually is a busy time. Now, let's see—you're a friend of Gregory's?"

Sherman was middle-aged, short and heavy set. His hair and beard were a sort of sandy-grizzle; his complexion slate-coloured; but his eyes were kindly and twinkling.

Carey explained his chance acquaintance with the artist.

"I see—I see," continued Mr. Sherman. "Well, let's take a look at your stuff. . . . Excuse me."

The telephone rang and, while Sherman was answering it, Carey untied the strings of the portfolio and opened it on the table behind the Art Editor's chair.

Sherman swung round as he hung up the receiver and picked up the first of Careys' proofs. But, at that moment, the large man with the fat jowl, the horn spectacles still pushed up on his bald forehead, came into the room. He laid a colour proof down on the desk.

"This fellow wants the earth. Wells and Farnsworth just rang me up. They say Morrissey wants a change of copy on all that part of our edition that goes into Canada. What's it going to cost? I won't allow 'em a nickel! I don't care if we lose the account. They want to use the same plates but new text matter. We'll have to get a new electro of the blue plate and stop the presses and make the change! That's the composition and eight electros. I'll charge 'em twice as much as it costs us, by God. Let me know as soon as you can."

He strode out of the room. Sherman picked up Carey's proof again, gazed at it absently, and then ran through the others, turning one over after another, giving each little more than a casual glance. Twice before he finished, he was interrupted. A boy came in with a bill to be O. K-ed, and there was another call at the telephone.

"Let me have your name and address, please. If some-

thing comes along that I think will interest you, I'll drop you a line."

It was a stock phrase. Carey knew Sherman used it a hundred times a week. He saw that he had lost his interest and attention. He made one more attempt to regain them.

"Just how shall I go about getting an assignment, Mr. Sherman? I've only been in New York a few days. How does a young fellow start in? Isn't there a right way—a short cut? Mr. Schilling said——"

"Short cut?" Sherman interrupted. "There's no such thing! All the successful men had to start in just as you've got to. Go round! Go call on the magazines and the advertising agencies, and keep on going. There's no other way I know of. If you're looking for short cuts, young man, I'd advise you to go back where you came from. . . . You'll excuse me, I know. You see how busy I am this morning. Come in again when you've got anything particular you'd like to show. I shall be glad to see it. Good morning."

Carey was out in the waiting room, in the hall, on the elevator, down on the street, before he realised how much he had depended on this interview. He stood at the curbing, his portfolio under his arm, and wondered what he should do next. He saw that he had happened in at an unfortunate time, when Sherman was particularly busy, and also that his use of the words "short cut" had been misunderstood. He determined he would go to see Sherman again in about a week and, even if he received no more welcome reception, he would at least correct the wrong impression he felt he had made.

He had not looked up the location of any of the magazines, but he knew where the Occident Company was. He turned down toward Union Square. At the first

news stand he came to, he wrote down half a dozen of the addresses of other periodicals.

The Occident Company for many years had occupied the same quarters on the top floors of an old brick building on the north side of the Square. It was a great publishing house; its books and magazines were considered to be the finest examples of the printer's and engraver's art. There was a venerable dignity about its offices of which Carey was aware while he was yet in the walnut-finished, many-mirrored elevator that bumped its way from side to side of the narrow shaft as it slowly and shakily ascended. A great many original drawings in black frames covered the high walls of the reception room. A round table on which were arranged the latest issues of the Occident Company's magazines, stood in the middle; chairs and settees lined three sides of the room, their backs set stiffly against the walls. The fourth side was given over to the accounting department; its high wooden partition cut off much of the light and gave the impression of having yearly encroached upon the space allotted to the waiting minutes of callers, agents, visitors, and applicants. This partition was pierced by three windows fitted with gates of shining brass rods and above them appeared neatly-lettered brass plates: "Cashier," "Bills," "Mail." Frosted panels of glass alternated with these grilled windows, permitting light to come through to the rest of the room, and bearing across their clouded surfaces, the name: Occident Company.

Carey turned interestedly to examine the original drawings. His breast rose in long breaths of admiration as he studied them. Here was Art he could appreciate! They were some of the finest illustrations he had seen. He was peering close at a large pastel by Herbert Archer, noting the predominating long lines in the artist's

method of work, when the Art Editor came out from behind the Accounting Department, and spoke his name, giving it the inflection of an interrogation.

He was a man about sixty years of age, tall and thin, with white hair and a sparse white beard; his complexion was pink like a woman's; the cheeks shot through with tiny veins of bright vermillion. His lips were red and when he spoke he showed many teeth which appeared to fill his mouth. His eyes behind his glasses were bright and pleasant, alert and interested. He nodded invitingly at Carey, winking rapidly, his teeth glistening between his red lips.

It was with a manner long used to the experience, however, that he picked up the artist's proofs and ran through them with quick, nervous movements of his hands, occasionally murmuring: "U-um,"—"Un-hun." When he finished looking them over, he turned to Carey, his red lips forming the smile that Carey knew he assumed when he dismissed the artists who failed to interest him.

"There's nothing here just in our line. We cannot use this kind of work, excellent as it is. Thank you very much for coming in and letting us have a look at it. Good morning, Mr.—Mr.—er—Williams—good morning."

The offices of a popular monthly were close by. Carey found himself presently waiting his turn with two other artists to see its Art Editor. The three of them had arrived almost simultaneously. The others were beginners like himself, but probably of less experience,—obviously straight from the Art Students League.

The Art Editor was too busy to see any one just at that moment. His assistant—a young man about Carey's own age—came to them and looked at the work. They

opened their portfolios together, and the assistant began to scrutinise each drawing and proof closely, holding it to the light, squinting his eyes, examining the larger originals through a reducing glass. Carey's proofs were inspected last. The other artists left "their names and addresses in case something that might interest them should turn up"—and departed. Carey's work took a long time to be examined. He was beginning to hope that the Editor was really interested. The prize poster for the State Fair was the last proof in the portfolio. Carey, a long time ago, had had a mat put around it; the edges were bound in black tape. It had been lithographed and printed in nine colours. It represented a girl, with a sun-bonnet falling back upon her shoulders, gathering wild flowers in an open field, the silhouette of Carey's native city in the background, the outlines of its spires, towers and office buildings picked out in grey against a brilliant blue sky.

The Editor studied it carefully. So far, he had made no comment; now he turned to Carey and said:

"This is an interesting colour scheme. I like it the best of what you have to show. The drawing of the girl's arm there is a little faulty, and I'm 'fraid you haven't done very much work for reproduction,—have you? It would be impossible to retain the values you have in this painting if it were reproduced."

Carey looked at him perplexed. At first he thought he had not understood correctly. It was impossible to believe that this magazine man did not recognise a lithograph proof! For a moment he was at a loss to know what to say.

"This—this is a reproduction!" he stammered. "The original painting is at home—it's in the State Capitol

back home. This is only a proof. It was lithographed—" he stopped, confused.

The other, by a quick movement, brought the poster nearer the window light and passed his fingers over its surface. Carey saw the blood beginning slowly to mount into his cheeks. He felt extremely sorry for him. He realised at once that this young editor knew nothing of either art or reproduction, and that part of his duty in that office was merely to see unknown artists as they came in and save his superior that annoyance. Carey, at the moment, would gladly have saved him the mortification of the discovery, had he been able.

"There's a bad light there," the Editor said. "I see you're right. I thought it was an oil painting." He began to laugh nervously.

"Oh, that's an easy mistake to make," Carey hastened to say. "The reproduction's better than the original. The colours are more evenly laid in the proof. Of course I like process work better for this kind of thing."

"We only use four-colour reproduction here," the other began, hesitatingly.

Carey looked at him curiously,—almost hopelessly. There was, he saw at a glance, no need of his wasting more of this man's time or of his own. It was like trying to carry on a conversation in Latin with a Laplander.

But how could the Art Editor or the Editor-in-Chief of that magazine afford to take such chances? Carey asked himself as he walked angrily down the street a few minutes later. A genius might some day drop in, proofs in hand, asking for a manuscript to illustrate. Was it reasonable to suppose that this college youth, who didn't know that four-colour reproduction was identical with process work, could recognise the earmarks of the genius?

How many a great artist's earliest work was crude and all but hopeless? Some one must have recognised his possibilities and given him a chance, some one with a trained eye; not this Bachelor of Arts who had picked up a few phrases like "values" and "four-colour work" and used them glibly to cover up his ignorance! How was he to tell Carey—or any one—that this arm was faulty or that drawing bad! The Art Editor, if he did his work with anything approaching to adequacy, must know that this individual, whom he sent out to represent himself and his magazine, knew nothing about Art. Much better would it be to send word that he was busy and callers must come again. It was the unfairness to artists that most incensed Carey. Those students from the Art League might have some very promising stuff. They were turned away, allowed to believe that it was not good enough to awaken the slightest interest—at least in the Assistant Art Editor of one of the most successful and influential monthlies. If all the magazines did that: the beginner would never be given a chance. Carey's jaw stiffened, and in his mind's eye he saw the day when that particular magazine would beg him to illustrate its next serial!

When he got back to the boarding house, lunch was almost over. Carey ate it in silence, refusing to allow his mind to dwell on the disappointments of the morning. He lay down on the bed in his room afterwards, and in a few moments was fast asleep. When he awoke it was nearly four o'clock.

The next day he started out again. He planned his itinerary with greater care. Starting in at Forty-second Street, he worked down town. In the course of the day he visited eleven magazine offices. At not one of them did he get the least encouragement.

He found the men who saw him—twice women looked at his proofs—of varying types. In the office of *Overman's Magazine*, the Art Editor was brusque to the point of rudeness. When Carey was shown into his office, he was busy writing. He threw him a brief glance and said over his shoulder:

"Stick your proofs around the room—anywhere, so I can see 'em."

Carey arranged them to the best advantage possible, propping them against the books on the desk, on the top of the radiator, and slipping them into the crack between the wainscoting and the wall. The Art Editor did not look up until the letter he was writing was completed and thrust into an envelope. Then, as he licked the flap, he whirled about and, after running his eye over a few of the proofs, said:

"We can't use stuff like that. Buy a copy of *Overman's Magazine* and study the pictures. And don't come again unless you're sure we'll be interested."

Carey also met the ultra-refined, elegantly attired Art Editor of *East and West*, with immaculate linen and exquisite manner, who, after examining his work rather casually, said: "Not interested," and, turning, passed through the swing door to the inner offices, leaving Carey humiliated and raging.

Even when courteously treated, he was conscious that the time it took to look at what he had to show was begrudged. Perhaps the most interesting call was at the office of *Stapleton's*. The Art Editor was the dean of his profession in the publishing business. Carey had heard of Ben Mercy ever since he went to Art School. No one could have been more friendly and pleasant, although Carey could see he was not interested in his work. He did not even ask him to leave his address: but for this

Carey was grateful. Most of the visit was taken up in a discussion of a painting that had just been delivered by the well-known marine artist, Henry Reuter. It was a large canvas, and rested on the floor and against a table close to Ben Mercy's large glass-topped desk. The picture represented a great battleship standing in the teeth of a fierce storm. The colour was all dull blues and greys and muddy greens; most of it had been laid on with a palette knife. The whole composition was intensely dramatic, the effects astonishingly obtained. Ben Mercy was amused at Carey's enthusiasm.

The pleasant warmth of this visit stayed with Carey all day. It kept him cheered and undismayed through the long succession of disappointments. His round ended at the offices of *Mirth*, where he was told he might leave his proofs for the Art Editor to look over, but it was against the rules of this individual ever to meet personally those soliciting work. Carey left his portfolio and called for it again the following morning, when it was handed over to him "with the thanks of the Art Editor for the privilege of seeing it."

The next day was as unfruitful as the preceding two. Carey directed most of his efforts, on this third attempt, to the publishing houses. But they were even more discouraging than the magazines had been. He was kept waiting for endless lengths of time by the individuals who gave out the books to be illustrated, and in two cases out of three he was told that there was nothing on hand just at the moment and that there was very little work to be given out at that time of the year.

His next attempt was made in the direction of the Advertising Agencies. Jerry Hart had a cousin who was a copy writer at the Frank Peabody Company. Carey went to see him and got a list of the Agencies and the

right men to ask for. He saw that he must apply the same tactics with the magazines. To ask simply for "the Art Editor" was to proclaim oneself a novice and a tyro. To enquire for the Art Editor by name was more dignified and commanded attention.

He was not sure whether he imagined it, or whether he was becoming hardened to the business of soliciting work, but it seemed to him that the Art Managers of the Advertising Agencies were pleasanter and more courteous than the Art Editors of the magazines. Certainly they knew their business better. Without exception, they took his name and address—and took it in a way that impressed Carey that some day they might actually have recourse to it. Also they asked him to call again, and their invitations sounded sincere. But, with equal unanimity, they told him that this was the dulllest time of the year and there was practically no work that their own staff of artists could not handle.

On the last day of the week, Saturday, a little before one o'clock, Carey stumbled into the offices of Marks and Heineman, one of the smaller advertising agencies. He was told the Advertising Manager would see him immediately. He found him, a little, short, nervous, wild-eyed young Jew, surrounded by three of his staff, his desk and room a bewildering confusion of disorder.

They were all waiting impatiently for Carey's entrance. He had no sooner stepped into the doorway than the little Jew began to shout to him:

"Say—yer're an artist? Yer ev' draw flowers? See here. Yer see that layout; I must have a pen and ink drawing of those flowers and roses—by Monday—nine o'clock. Yer understand what's wanted? Copy that photograph and the cover of this florist's catalogue—so. I've made this sketch the way I want 'em. Put the roses

up in the corner and the rest down below ; the type goes in here. D' yer think yer c' do it? Yer've done work like that before?"

Carey took up the rough pencil sketch, glanced at the catalogue and photograph and nodded.

"Well—yer have the drawing here Monday morning—nine o'clock. What's yer name? Write it down here, and yer address. If yer work's good, I'll have more for yer."

On his way home, Carey was amused by the thought that his first commission in New York had been given him, not on the strength of his work—samples of which he had not even been asked to show—but on his having opportunely dropped in at that particular office at a moment when the Art Manager was at a loss to know how he was going to get a pen-and-ink drawing executed over Sunday!

CHAPTER VI

CAREY delivered the drawing of the flowers at nine o'clock the following Monday morning. The young Jew was in a much less agitated state of mind. He made no comment, either regarding Carey's promptness or the quality of the sketch. He glanced at it, marked the size of the reduction, and wrote with a thick blue pencil at the bottom of the card: "Cut due at 3 p. m." He called a boy and instructed him to "hustle it over to the engravers." Then he drew a voucher for five dollars, handed it to Carey with the information that he could get his money at the cashier's window on his way out, and turned to other work as though the incident was finished. But Carey lingered, and presently the other looked up.

"You said there might be other work?" Carey began.

"Oh—hum!" The Jew began to rub his chin reflectively. "Got any yer stuff with yer?" he asked.

Carey explained that he had brought it on Saturday, but that no one had asked to see it, and he had presumed that it wasn't of interest.

The Jew continued to rub his chin.

"C'n yer do monograms?" he asked. "Here, I tell yer what to do." He caught up a blank envelope and wrote

down several letters of the alphabet, drawing circles about groups of twos and threes of them.

"Yer come to-morrow morning an' show me what kind of monograms yer c' make out of 'em. They're for cigarettes—yer understand? Got ter be snappy and smart—but neat. If yer're any good—I'll give yer a job. Come to-morrow, before ten o'clock."

There were nine monograms to be made. Carey worked on them all day, and made nearly three times that number, working out several arrangements of the same groups. He wondered, as he bent over his drawing board, at his point of view which had so changed in less than a week's time. A few days ago, he would have sneered at any one suggesting his doing such trivial work as designing monograms. Now he was glad of the chance. New York had made the difference. He knew it wasn't himself, or the men he had called upon, or his lack of experience or ability. It was the grip of the City. The Thing that roared and swirled about him—the Thing of which he had the temerity to wish to become a part—reached first at such as he to fling aside, to trample under foot. Carey saw, however, that, in his very ability to recognise that it was the relentless and remorseless City itself that he fought and not the individual men and immediate conditions that met and confronted him, lay his hope of eventually winning success and controlling the great force that now was so eager to destroy him. These men were the City's creatures. It made them what they were. In that brief flash of clear seeing, Carey found the courage and the strength that carried him through that first hot, baking summer and through the years that followed. Not until he was an older man did he come to see that this same idea was the key to the understanding of all life.

Carey was put on the regular pay roll of Marks and Heineman at fifteen dollars a week. For this he was expected to design from ten to twenty monograms a day. It was hard work at first; but, at the end of a month, he grew astonishingly proficient in their execution, and often did his work in the evening after he had spent the day idling with Jerry Hart. With the feeling a permanent income gave him, Carey allowed what remained of Joe Downer's two-hundred-dollar loan to slip through his fingers in trifling extravagancies, until it was entirely dissipated. This did not worry him, as he knew Joe wasn't in need of it and had lent him the money on the understanding that two years might elapse before it was repaid.

His first summer in New York was a great enjoyment to Carey. He settled down to a routine that involved nothing exacting or distasteful. Marks and Heineman were entirely satisfied with his monograms. Only once was he requested to make one of his designs over again. Ackerman, the young Jew who was in charge of the Art Department, became friendly with Carey, but it never occurred to him to suggest another kind of work. After a few weeks, Carey began to mail his designs in to the Advertising Agency and to receive his orders by mail in return. Every Monday morning the post brought him his check for fifteen dollars, and after Mrs. Fillmore had claimed her due, this left a sufficiently small balance to make the spending of it an interesting and exhilarating weekly experience.

Carey's amusements were not of a vicious order. Women played no part in his scheme of pleasure. Even if his income had permitted it, he was singularly clean-minded, though he had no particular moral convictions on such matters. Occasionally he and Jerry Hart dropped in at the famous dance-hall, the *Haymarket*, late in the

evening, for the sheer social pleasure of talking to girls of approximately their own ages. They danced with those they found there and bought them drinks. Sometimes Carey came home alone, but not often.

Coney Island was the place they frequented most. Almost every day that Jerry Hart could steal from his work, without his employers knowing it, found the two of them at the Bridge scrambling on board a train marked for Coney Island. Immediately upon arriving there was a rush to get into bathing suits; and then followed long hours upon the hot sands, smoking cigarettes preserved in a tin candy box they carried with them from the bathhouse, meeting confidence with confidence, maintaining a keen rivalry in the darkening tan on arms and legs. Neither of them could swim, but they both loved the water and enjoyed ball playing and sprints along the wet sand. Invariably they ate too many peanuts and popcorn crisps, and came home on the crowded, hot, glaring trains, utterly fatigued and with a heavy sense of outraged digestions.

With French and McNeil, Carey found much diversion in protracted arguments on such subjects as college education, Tammany, a sermon by Dr. Parkhurst, women's fashions, intemperance, marriage, football, Roosevelt, the newly-opened subway, any topic that might, in an idle conversation, be casually mentioned. Often, after dinner, Carey would turn into their room as they reached the top landing together, and drop into one of the Morris chairs with the intention of staying just long enough to finish his cigarette. His monograms for the day might be but half completed, and idling then would mean working late into the night or rising early in the morning. But ten o'clock would find French sprawled diagonally on the bed, waving his cigarette at the ceiling and vehe-

mently asserting that Henry George's ideas of taxation were the only tenable ones that "a sane, intelligent, thinking man could possibly entertain." McNeil was the arbiter in these discussions. He sat in the other Morris chair by the open window, puffing placidly on a strongly-smelling black briar, maintaining a noncommittal attitude, gratified and pleased when the others deferred to him. Carey felt himself often beyond his depth in these discussions, for French was an astonishingly well-informed person, had read generously, and had thought about the things he read. He had an irritating, dogmatic way of expressing himself, and Carey would be drawn into an argument with him, annoyed by the finality of his tone. It was all very pleasant and stimulating, and Carey grew to look forward to these talks.

Repeatedly, in the middle of their argument, Jerry Hart would burst into the room with the information that they were missing something. This was always the signal to turn out the light hastily and gather at the window to spy upon some unconscious female in one of the houses that abutted on the rear, during the process, leisurely pursued, of going to bed. Presently, if he were in, Doctor Floherty would be summoned, and Jerry would stamp upon the floor to attract the attention of Washburn in the room below. These observations never resulted in any satisfaction to the observers, for the shade was either discreetly drawn or the light prematurely extinguished.

Carey was always annoyed at these interruptions. He called Jerry a "Peeping Tom," and asserted that the spying was a senseless and useless waste of time. He assumed an attitude of indifference and refused to be a party to the others' unworthy curiosity; but an exclamation from Jerry or a general laugh at some amusing ac-

tion on the part of the unconsciously observed always drew him to the window eventually.

With "Doc" Floherty and Durrant, and sometimes Jerry Hart, Carey frequently went out to Van Cortlandt Park to play golf. He and Jerry were beginners at the game; but Carey enjoyed the exercise and the good fellowship, although he never achieved sufficient proficiency to feel the fascination necessary to becoming a good player.

On the night preceding such a trip to Van Cortlandt Park, Mrs. Fillmore would leave a pile of bread-and-butter sandwiches and a large bowl of peanuts in the middle of the dining-room table and a quart of cold mixed coffee in the ice chest. At a little after five the next morning, three, or sometimes four, shadowy shapes groped their way down the stairs, still stiff and yawning, and Durrant, who assumed the management and direction of these expeditions, would reclaim the quart of coffee from its cold storage and heat it up in a saucepan over the gas stove. Carey always remembered these mornings. At that hour he bitterly regretted having agreed to be a member of the party. Durrant was usually cross and silent. Jerry, angry at having been dragged forcibly from his bed, cursed himself and the others individually and collectively. "Doc" Floherty, who had risen half an hour earlier than the rest for his cold bath, was irritatingly brisk and buoyant. The bread of the sandwiches, grown stale in the night, had begun to harden and curl at the edges, and, when the gas in the kitchen was lit, an army of black water bugs and cockroaches scuttled for the cracks and chinks in the floor and wainscoting.

Half an hour later, on the elevated train, their spirits

would rise, and the Doctor usually started them all laughing with an imitation of Durrant's scowl and muttering as he tinkered with the gas stove, persuading it to burn properly, while Jerry and Carey quarrelled over the sandwiches and peanuts in the dining room. At One Hundred and Fifty-fifth Street, they caught the train that left for Yonkers at six-thirty—the first train out of a Sunday morning—and by seven o'clock they were teeing off for the first hole, the course rolling out below them, dew sparkling on the cobweb-covered grass, the birds deliriously singing, the sun warm and pleasant, the whole world verdant and enchanting.

Toward ten o'clock, the course became congested with the golfers that arrived every half hour by the train-load; but, on the first round of eighteen holes, Carey and his friends practically had the course to themselves, playing ahead of the rest.

There was a certain moment on these days that Carey always afterward remembered with a sigh of satisfaction. Just across the road from the eighteenth hole there was a little sodawater and dairy establishment where one could drink glass after glass of the most refreshing and delicious milk. After he had put down the numeral 7 or 8 on his score card and added up the eighteen entries to gaze ruefully at the distressing total, there would come suddenly a realisation of how hot and tired he was. Then it was that the thought of that wonderful milk awaiting him in the little dairy gave him a delicious promise of refreshment. He never forgot the anticipation of these moments, or the wonderful feeling of satisfaction that followed them. On the high turn-stools against the counter, Durrant and the Doc discussed the latter's successful mid-iron shot to the sixth green, or the former's difficulties in the brook between the tenth

and eleventh holes,—while Jerry idly flirted with the girl behind the counter and Carey drank one glass of milk after another.

They were happy days, free from responsibility, lulling the desire for achievement.

CHAPTER VII

WITH the early fall, a subtle change in the character of the city became evident to Carey. As he expressed it one evening at the dinner table, "things seemed to have begun to hum." Blanchard pushed back his chair and lit the cigar he had begged from Durrant.

"Young man," he said, "what you observe is the return of the people. In June the annual hegira begins—the exodus to the country. In September the populace returns to its home. The week prior to the opening of the public schools, three hundred thousand people enter New York City daily . . ."

"Come, come, Blanchard," interrupted Doctor Floherty, "that would mean over two million people coming back to the city during that week. The transportation facilities here could not possibly handle that number."

"Well, sir, you may be an authority on serums and bacilli, but I have lived in this town for nigh onto sixty years."

A long argument followed, which eventually involved both Charley Fillmore and Durrant, and when Carey and Jerry Hart slipped away upstairs, the raised voices followed them to the top floor.

But Carey recognised that the town was filling up, no matter what the rate per day might be. The sidewalks

were more crowded, the traffic in the streets was more congested. Somehow, a look of eagerness, of wary expectation, came into the faces of the people one passed upon the streets. Men and women alike seemed to be preparing themselves for the struggle of the winter before them.

The boy was so impressed with this idea that he decided to draw a cartoon about it. He intended to call it *The Rush and Bustle of the City's Mart*. He worked feverishly for two days, and then, because a woman's figure in the foreground would not come right, suddenly lost interest and turned its face to the wall with other unfinished work.

A pastel sketch of Jerry Hart he attempted one evening, however, proved more successful. It did not take him over an hour to finish, and he felt when it was completed that he really had done an excellent bit of drawing. He had caught Jerry's whimsical smile and the hint of fun in his eyes, and the work itself was free, devoid of that rigidity and tightness which he knew was his greatest weakness.

He tried to make a sketch of himself after this. A combination of mirrors secured for him a half profile of his own face, but the result was not good. He failed to catch an expression, and the fairness of his hair and his high colouring escaped him altogether.

He went back to his monograms, fiercely assuring himself that his chance would come some day and he'd "show 'em." But he did not fool himself entirely by his blustering. Deep down in his own consciousness there lurked an uneasy conviction of shirking. His work assured him of bed and board, but Carey had not come to New York to make monograms for Marks and Heineman. That should have been only a makeshift, a temporary compro-

mise. In his heart he knew he was drifting with whatever current beset him.

The opening of the theatres with the fall and winter offerings proved a source of absorbing interest to both himself and Jerry. They made it a point to go on first nights, and, later, over their beer at *Scheffel Hall*, discussed the players and the play. The full page of theatrical advertisements in the *Sunday Herald* was pored over at the breakfast table and long afterwards. They prided themselves on their familiarity with theatrical terms and the glibness with which these could be used.

"Faversham's going to open in *Letty* next week at Wallack's. I hear it's a pippin. Let's go," Carey would say, glancing up from his page of ads.

"Right," Jerry would assent. "Frank Daniel's got a new show, I see, *Sergeant Blue*. That girl Blanch Ring is in it. She's the one that sings *In the Good Old Summer Time*. She can hang her hat up in my house any time she likes."

"Oh, for God's sake!" Carey would exclaim, "shut up. You give me a pain. . . . I'm crazy to see this *Letty* show. It's by Pinero, you know. I saw a play by him once that was the greatest thing I've ever seen in my life. It's called *The Gay Lord Quex*. There's a girl in it who . . ."

Jerry, at this point, would fling aside his paper and, assuming an attitude of devotion, begin:

"From all inordinate and obnoxious bores, from all vainglorious and conceited asses, from all recounters of dramatic plots, good Lord deliver us."

"Well, don't you begin talking about favourites of the stage falling hopeless victims to your irresistible charms," Carey would rejoin. "There's no prig worse than that. What'll we do this afternoon?"

Later in October, just as the trees had begun to take on their most vivid foliage, the two boys went with the Fillmores and Anna Blanchard on an excursion up the Hudson. The affair was arranged by a Sunday School Association to which Anna belonged. One of the largest of the river steamers had been chartered, and every Episcopal Sunday School in the city sent its delegation.

Carey, who was anxious to satisfy his artist's soul with a view of the Palisades in the autumn, of which he had heard since infancy, was somewhat surprised at Jerry's ready compliance with the suggestion from Anna Blanchard that they should come along. Jerry studiously avoided any social intercourse with the Fillmores and Carey aped his attitude; but, in his heart, he had a genuine liking for them all, with the possible exception of Charley, whose frankly acknowledged indifference to his mother's efforts to support himself, his wife and children aroused Carey to intense exasperation. He was, consequently, greatly relieved when Charley failed to meet them at the Battery early on the morning of the excursion. Charley had announced that he would not be home the night before, but had promised to meet the family at half-past eight the following morning. Carey hadn't a doubt that, somewhere, he was sleeping off a jag acquired during the evening's debauch.

There were nine in the party: Mrs. Fillmore and Miss Watt, bulging and gigantic, with hats and veils; Mrs. Charley Fillmore, with her usual sad and tearful expression, one of her scrawny, straight-haired little girls grasped in either hand; old Blanchard maintaining a constant flow of comment to whomever would listen; his daughter and the two boys.

Anna Blanchard wore a yellow satin badge with long silky fringe, which proclaimed her to be a "Delegate of

St. George's Sunday School Teachers Association." Carey, catching a glimpse of her face as she was talking to Jerry by the boat rail, thought her, for the first time, pretty. One grew accustomed to her disfiguring nose; it ceased to be noticeable. Her constant eager expression, her merry eyes, her readiness to laugh, made for a certain likableness in her face that gave it beauty. She had a new hat trimmed with daisies, and her hair curled prettily about her face, flushed with the excitement of the moment. Her girlish figure was both lithe and graceful.

The *Narragansett* seemed crowded to its capacity. The day was the last of a late Indian summer, and the white clothes of hot weather were once more called into service. Everywhere white shirt waists and white skirts brightened the decks of the old river-boat. Children wormed their way between their elders, calling to each other, running in the occasional vacant places on the deck, colliding with the groups that formed and dissolved and formed again. Forward, a great quantity of folding canvas stools had been piled. A mad scramble was in progress about these, the men struggling among themselves to secure a sufficient number for the needs of their parties. Every now and then, a man would pass along the crowded deck, three or four of these stools hooked by each arm, crying, "Excuse me, please—kindly let me by, please. Gangway!"

There was a general confusion among the passengers to secure the desirable positions on board. Almost all the women carried packages and bundles, and many held nursing bottles in their hands, wrapped in strips of flannel to keep the milk warm. The day promised later to be hot; but, at that hour in the morning, there prevailed a soft haze over both land and water. The sun shone

murkily through this, a flat disc of fire-colour just over the grey shadows of the factories and office buildings of Brooklyn. The gold and brown of the leaves on the trees in Battery Park gave encouraging promise of the glories of the Palisades.

Suddenly, the air was split with the raucous snarl of the *Narragansett's* whistle. At once there arose from many throats cries and shouts. "Here we go! We're off! All ashore that's going ashore! Hurry! Good-bye, all! There she blows! Don't you wish it was Europe?"

Simultaneously, a brass band in the stern burst out with a blare of horns and a crash of cymbals and drums.

Carey, from where he hung over the rail with Jerry, looked down on the group of people standing below on the deck, heard a bell somewhere, deep inside the old steamer. Immediately, a fine tremor of the rail tickled the palm of his hand where it rested upon it. Slowly the *Narragansett* got under way, her nose swinging out into the stream, while hawsers still held her stern to the dock. Presently these were cast off and the shore began rapidly to recede, shrinking back upon itself; the outline of the city became more definite, fitting itself into the pictures and photographs Carey had so often seen of "New York's sky line."

Anna came up to them. She was radiant; from sheer exuberance of spirits, she was suddenly seized with one of her fits of silent laughter, holding her handkerchief to her eyes, her back and shoulders shaking convulsively.

"Got the pip?" Jerry asked, unconcernedly. Anna's increased contortions bore evidence to her appreciation of his humour. Presently she was able to control herself, wiping the tears from her eyes, leaning her elbows upon the rail.

"You always make me laugh, Mr. Hart," she said. "I don't know how it is. The things you say! I sometimes wake up in the night and get laughing like anything, just remembering what you've said."

"You'd make a hit on the stage," said Carey, "if you only could get a nightly audience with Miss Blanchard's appreciation."

"That's just what I say!" exclaimed Anna. "I was saying just that same thing to Mamma Muggins last night. I said Mr. Hart would make a great hit on the stage."

"Aw, forget it!" said Jerry, embarrassed by the girl's earnestness. "My line's selling graphite, which same edifying occupation I ought to be doing right this minute!"

"Oh, now, Mr. Hart!" expostulated Anna. "Surely they can spare you one Saturday morning. I'm so glad you both could come."

There was a silence. The three leaned on the rail, watching the city slip past them. Carey recalled his first impression of New York, from almost that same point of view: a confused tangle of black shadows piled one upon another; a crouching monster, silent, menacing, awaiting its prey. His resolve not to be a quitter, to achieve success, to win preferment, not to be devoured by the monster, came back to him with no pleasing sense of having stuck to his determination. That morning was the first on which Marks and Heineman would fail to receive their monograms from him. He had fallen asleep over his work the night before and, rising early, had had only half the number finished by breakfast time. Jerry's suggestion that he send word that he was sick seemed to solve the problem so efficiently and so pleasantly that he had grasped it and sent a note by a messenger written

in pencil to convey the impression of having been written in bed. Five months had slipped by, and he had so far failed to make the slightest headway toward realising any of the ambitions that had been his back home.

"You dance, don't you, Mr. Williams?" Anna Blanchard was speaking to him. "We're going to have some dancing later on, and there's a girl here I want you to meet. She's one of our teachers. I know you'll like her. . . . I'll have to go now. Dr. Hammersmith may be needing me. See you later."

The *Narragansett* was passing the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument. Carey gazed at it, struck with admiration, resolving to make a sketch of it on his first free morning.

Presently the steamer began to manœuvre for its landing at One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street. A crowd, almost as large as the one that had boarded the steamer at the Battery, waited for the *Narragansett* to dock. Carey could hardly believe it possible that so many more would be allowed on board.

"It's the Sunday Schools that sell the tickets," explained Jerry. "If they weren't so dead eager to pull people's legs for half a dollar, there wouldn't be a crowd like this. It's not the steamship company's fault."

"But where are they going to put them?" Carey demanded. "There isn't a stool or a seat left, except inside."

"Oh, don't worry. Every one of 'em knows what an excursion is like, and comes prepared."

Somewhere, somehow, the additional hundreds of passengers found room aboard the *Narragansett*, and, when the steamer once more resumed her course up the river, there was a general altering of positions and set-

ting down. It was as though the worst that each had feared was now over. The One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street crowd had been disposed of, and now no one was likely to disturb them. There would be no more stops until they reached West Point.

Carey and Jerry Hart joined the Fillmores on the forward deck, where they had established themselves on the shady side in the lee of the pilot house, the door of which bore the words: "No Admittance. This Means You." The two little girls were already eating, their faces smeared with jam and crumbs. Mrs. Fillmore and Miss Watt were comfortably seated in chairs, while the others, on the folding canvas stools, were grouped about them. Mrs. Charley Fillmore, her hands engaged with crackers and a jam knife, was endeavouring to brush aside with the back of her bent wrist a wisp of hair that had blown across her eyes. Mr. Blanchard was explaining again and again how he had been able to secure the two chairs for Mrs. Fillmore and Miss Watt while others had to be contented with the folding stools. Anna was not with them. One of the little girls, holding an extra stool tight in her thin little arms, screamed to the two boys as they came up, her mouth full of jam and crackers, that neither of them could have that stool because it belonged to Aunt Annie.

"The Palisades begin on the opposite shore, Mr. Williams," Miss Watt explained. "*I* said we ought to be on the other side. All the colouring in the foliage is on that side; you only see the country places of rich folks from this side. But it's pretty both sides. You, being an artist, are sure to like the colouring of the leaves, especially as you say you don't have any autumn where you come from. . . . But ain't it a grand day?"

Mrs. Fillmore, after considerable fishing in her reticule,

produced some sewing. A great deal of confusion followed. Mrs. Fillmore, it seemed, never could thread her needle, her eyes were too poor; Miss Watt hadn't her glasses with her; Mrs. Charley Fillmore was all "jammy"; Mr. Blanchard said he'd try; but Jerry finally volunteered and slipped the silk through the eye with as little difficulty as a seamstress.

They were still marvelling at his dexterity when Anna joined them. A friend was with her, who was introduced all round as Miss Boardman. Carey sensed that this was the girl with whom later he was expected to dance. She was rather small, with a trim figure, dark hair and eyes, decidedly pretty, with a rather serious expression. Presently Anna carried the two boys and Miss Boardman off to see the Palisades, a particularly beautiful portion of which she declared they were passing at that moment.

A magnificent mosaic of a myriad of brilliant tones covered the abrupt shore. The acclivity rose nearly two hundred sheer feet. Yellows, reds, purples, browns, with every conceivable gradation in shade, overspread the steep bank; and this sumptuous blending of colours stretched up and down the river as far as the eye could see. Although Carey had expected something wonderful, he was deeply stirred. Anna broke into exclamations of rapture and led Jerry further forward to show him the contrast between the opposing shores. It was not till some time afterwards that Carey became suddenly aware that Miss Boardman was silently leaning upon the rail beside him, chin on palm, obviously stirred by the mad patchwork of colour slipping by them.

It was several minutes before either of them spoke. Behind them and about them rose a babble of noise; the laughter and shrill cries of girls, the deeper tones of the men's voices, the screams of children. Carey thought

how vulgar and sordid it seemed, and wished himself a thousand miles away. He turned to the girl:

"It's beautiful, isn't it?"

"Yes,—I've never seen anything so exquisite. You're an artist? Miss Blanchard said you . . ."

"I make my living by drawing. I've begun to respect the term 'artist';—so many claim it who haven't any right to do so. It takes years of hard work to become an artist—a *real* artist."

Miss Boardman made no reply. She continued gazing at the autumnal pageant that seemed to grow more lavish and brilliant as the steamer proceeded.

"I know what you mean," she said. "I hate pretence. I teach a class of little boys in our Sunday School, but I'm not a teacher; I'm really a student; and with Scriptural matters I shall always be that. I feel so hypocritical when my little boys turn to me as an authority for answers to their questions. The only title I really deserve," she said with a little laugh, "is that of 'stenographer.'"

"Where do you work?" Carey asked. He thought it remarkable for this girl to acknowledge so simply she was a wage-earner.

"I'm with the Consolidated Press Syndicate."

Carey turned to her, surprised.

"You are! Do you know Mr. Sherman?"

"Oh, yes, indeed. I take dictation from him almost every day. He's very nice."

"I called on him once to show him some of my work." Carey told her about his visit and the interruption of the big man with the heavy jowl and the black moustache.

"That's Mr. Reinhardt. He's the General Manager; he's a hard man to work for; he yells at the girls so he frightens them nearly to death. The telephone operator

is Miss Allison. She's a dear; I'm awfully fond of her. . . . Did Mr. Sherman give you a story?"

"He was going to," said Carey, "when that big guy—Mr. Reinhardt—butted in."

"You ought to call on him again. He's kind to beginners."

Her phrase ruffled Carey. His first impulse to meet her own frankness with equal simplicity gave place to an eager desire to impress her.

"Oh, I guess he can come after me now," he said. "I had just hit New York when I went to see him, and that was his chance. As it is, Ben Mercy was the first to recognise what I could do. He and the Art Editor of the Occident give me all the work I can possibly handle."

Miss Boardman's silence left him in doubt as to whether she was awed by this information, or whether she knew he lied. The situation was saved by Anna and Jerry joining them.

Anna was in the wildest spirits, bordering on hysteria. She threw her arms around Miss Boardman and began to kiss her rapturously, to the girl's obvious embarrassment.

"Oh, quit playing post-office," cried Carey, in disgust. "Who said there was going to be any dancing?"

"Let's go down on the deck below—and see," cried Anna. "I hear the band! Come on, Janey!" She caught the other girl's hand and started for the nearest stairway. Carey and Jerry Hart followed.

The music furnishing the clue, the four had no difficulty in locating the dancing on a lower deck. Aft, in the rear of the cabin, the deck had been roped off. The band, which had dwindled to six pieces, was arranged in a ragged half-circle at the stern. Inside the roped space, couples were gravely revolving. There seemed no grace or abandon or mirth in their movements. Seriously, with

conscientious effort, they applied themselves to the matter in hand. Even the music seemed to emanate from some kind of a mechanical contrivance. Jerry slipped behind Miss Boardman, put one arm around her waist, and whirled her off among the dancers. Carey, about to ask Anna to follow their example, was interrupted by the Reverend Mr. Hammersmith, who wanted to talk to Anna about the Church guild. Carey watched the dancers a while, feeling forlorn and dispirited. Presently the dance was over, and Miss Boardman and Jerry met him, both smiling happily, breathing hard from their exertions.

They were drinking lemonade at a counter that had been rigged up close by for the convenience of the dancers, when the music for the next dance began. As Anna came towards them, Jerry and Miss Boardman turned about together and Carey was obliged to ask Anna for the dance.

He was thoroughly disgusted with everything and everybody now, and decided to sulk. He excused himself to Anna when the music ceased, and went down to the lower deck where the men were smoking. Here was located the bar—but to-day it was covered over with an iron grating, heavily padlocked. About its counter and brass footrail, Carey knew many a drunken scene had taken place. He had often heard of the orgies that occurred on these excursion steamers when a rough holiday crowd was on board. There were sometimes fights—serious ones—with perhaps a quick knife-thrust or the flash of a revolver whipped from a hip pocket.

Carey smoked a cigarette, and then made the circle of the narrow deck outside. There were few people,—only those who had not been able to find room on the decks above, or those who preferred the comparative quiet. At the stern, where the wake suddenly formed, a writhing,

gushing white tangle of foam, stretching out behind across the even surface of the river like a trailing mass of floating hair, the deck was deserted. He investigated some of the corridors that ran between the state rooms and cabins, and, trying some of the handles of the doors, was surprised to find one of them unlocked.

He had never seen the inside of a steamer's stateroom before. He glanced up and down the narrow corridor. At one end a single light in a red globe cast a mysterious ruddy reflection on the double row of white, silent doors, passively facing one another, all carefully shut and locked except this one. The *Narragansett* began to roll slightly from the wash of a passing steamer. The smell of cooking from the galley, where lunch was being prepared, floated down the corridor. An altercation between the coloured cooks was in violent progress.

Cautiously Carey pushed open the door. The stateroom was quite empty; he stepped in. It was of ordinary size, but it seemed to him absurdly small. On the left were two bunks, the lower considerably wider than the upper. In both were mattresses, and across these lay two neatly folded blankets. The porthole was securely bolted. Underneath it stood the wash stand, designed for economy of space; a small piece of a well-advertised soap, wrapped up in a gaudy wrapper, lay in the soap dish. Behind the door and along the side of the wall, hooks were carefully arranged for clothes. There was a white wooden stool. This completed the room's inventory. And yet it had a decidedly romantic charm for Carey. He thought of himself and Jerry taking a trip together in such a compact little cabin. His heart thrilled. By kneeling on the stool he could peer out of the porthole upon the narrow deck which he had recently traversed. Two people, a man and a girl, sat immediately beneath

him, eating an early lunch from a yellow pasteboard shoe-box.

He felt that Jerry must see this enchanting room. He slipped into the narrow hall and closed the door silently behind him. It was part of the game to be mysterious about it.

He came upon his friend descending the stairway from the upper deck. Each was looking for the other.

"Well, for the love of——!"

"Say, Jerry, I want to show you one of the cabins down below. The door was unlocked; I just happened to try the handle."

"Are you sore about something?" Jerry demanded.

Carey looked blank.

"Well, what do you go sneaking off for like that? Just like a sore-headed bear!"

"Oh, forget it, Jerry," said Carey. "Sore—nothing! Come ahead—I want to show you this cabin. . . . Jerry, would you like to travel somewhere—on a big steamer?"

When they reached the stateroom, Carey was disappointed in the other's seeming lack of enthusiasm. Jerry looked about, evidently interested, but indifferent to the romantic charm that had possessed Carey so completely.

"What do you think of little Janey?" asked Jerry abruptly.

"Janey? Janey—who?" demanded Carey.

"Anna's friend. You know! Miss Boardman! Isn't she a pippin?" the other continued.

Carey said nothing. He was thinking of Jerry's cleverness with women, his ability to reach terms of intimacy with them that would take him, Carey, weeks to achieve.

Jerry sat down on the lower berth and ran his hands through his hair.

"You like her, don't you, Carey?" he said. "Well, I

had a hunch you did. I won't go butting in. Go to it, me boy; you have my blessing!"

Carey was surprised to find himself suddenly angry. He cursed Jerry violently.

"God! You make me sick! It's girls and women—women and girls, with you from morning to night. A pretty woman can't pass you on the street without you smirking and blurting out, 'Get on to the skirt,'—'Pipe the shape.' You've gone stark crazy about girls. You can't meet a decent little girl like that Boardman kid that you don't immediately begin to chase her—calling her by her first name—twosing and flirting with her. Why, even poor old Anna Blanchard you can't let alone. What is there in it for you, with a girl like Anna? She's a silly, hysterical creature, almost an old maid! You go teasing and jollying the poor thing until she doesn't know whether she's afoot or ahorseback."

Jerry stared at his friend in amazement. Carey rarely expressed himself so vehemently. His fair skin was congested with his emotion, his hands were clenched, his voice shook.

"Well—well—well!" Jerry said, placatingly. "Don't get so excited. Good Lord—you fly off the handle like a nervous old hen. Anna isn't so bad, now. She's got a trim enough figure, and there isn't any harm in admiring a beautiful figure, is there? I bet you, she . . . Well, never mind. You're too damn touchy. Forget it, my boy. What did you say about taking a trip somewhere?"

Carey began to explain how much a voyage in a big steamer, with Jerry and himself in a little cabin such as they were in, would mean to him. For a long time they argued the different countries they preferred. Carey wanted to visit South America; Jerry was only interested in Paris. Carey had heard his father talk of the beauties

of Buenos Aires and the Argentina, and he had always been eager to see them for himself. He was regaling Jerry with some of his father's experiences when he observed that the other was not listening. Brusquely he stood up.

"Come on; it must be lunch time. Let's eat in the restaurant. The Fillmores have a lot of boxes packed with lunch, but I know just what's in 'em. We get enough of their grub, anyhow."

As they came out in the smoking cabin, they were surprised to find it later than they thought. The *Narragansett* was slowing down for the landing at the public dock at West Point. Luncheon in the restaurant was almost over. A few late diners were hurriedly finishing the remnants on their plates, departing from the saloon, toothpicks in mouths. The old steamer listed heavily to starboard as her passengers crowded along her rail, craning their necks to watch the boat make her landing.

Carey's eyes were fastened on the grey stone buildings beyond upon the hill, where at one time he had hoped he was to learn to become a soldier.

In the scramble that attended the disembarking, he lost Jerry. He spent nearly ten minutes of the hour that the excursionists were allowed to view the Academy in looking for him. He waved to the two white bundles on the upper deck that represented Mamma Muggins and Miss Watt. None of the others was with them. He decided, presently, that Jerry had gone on, and he set out to overtake him.

He failed to do so, however, as the excursionists were scattered over the Academy grounds. He was disappointed in seeing so few of the cadets. Most of them were in their class rooms; he caught an occasional glimpse

of a grey-uniformed figure at a window. Once a cadet officer passed him, his note books under his arm, the ends of the red sash about his waist flying behind him as he walked. Carey could not keep his eyes away from him, fascinated by the other's erect carriage, the suppleness of his young physique, the grace with which he strode along.

A prolonged blast of the *Narragansett's* whistle advised him that it was time to return. The excursionists began to retrace their steps toward the boat. But Carey failed to encounter Jerry, either in the numerous groups that passed him, or later when he made a tour of the steamer's decks after the last of her passengers had come aboard, the gang-plank pulled in, and the return trip begun. He met Miss Boardman, however, as he came up to where the Fillmores were sitting, in the hope that, as a final possibility, Jerry might have joined them. None had seen Jerry. Miss Boardman was looking for Anna, half afraid she had been left behind. Together they made a final circuit of the upper deck.

"Perhaps they've eloped," suggested Carey.

Miss Boardman glanced at him a moment and began to laugh.

When she laughed, Carey was struck with the exceeding charm of her expression. In repose, her face was almost too serious.

"Anna's eloping with any one seems to me terribly funny," she said. "She's far too much the cricket-by-the-hearth for that."

"For a person who lives such a humdrum existence, she seems to get an awful lot of fun out of life," Carey remarked.

"That's her nature," said Jane Boardman. "I never knew any one with so sunny a disposition. I've known

Anna for over three years, and I've never seen her when she was either blue or unhappy. And she's had a great deal more trouble than I."

"Have you had trouble?" asked Carey. "You don't look as though you'd ever had an unhappy day in your life."

Miss Boardman shrugged her shoulders lightly.

"Oh, nothing much. Just money trouble. My father lost his money and he's—he's ill, you know. It's—" she hesitated, "it's a sort of paralysis, they say," she added. "My brother and I have to work. . . . They're dancing again. Let's go down."

It was too hot for dancing. The roped-off deck they found deserted, the musicians drooping over their instruments. Boys with "ice-cold lemonade" and sheaves of straws were working their way among the crowded groups, hawking their beverage. Most of the men were asleep, their figures sprawled across the deck or propped on chairs. The clatter of children was noticeably hushed. Occasionally one heard a subdued crooning from a mother coaxing a child into its mid-day nap.

"Let's go down on the deck below," suggested Carey. "There's almost no one there, and it's quiet and cool; you can walk up and down. Did you ever take an ocean voyage on a big steamer, Miss Boardman?"

"No, I never have," she answered. "Of course I should like it, some day. I should dearly love to travel. Have you?"

Carey commenced telling her about the stateroom he had found unlocked that morning. He finished by telling her all about his home, his mother, his life and his ambitions.

They had found two stools, and placed them in the extreme stern. They hung over the rail watching the

foaming waters rush violently together, pouring themselves into the great hole the steamer constantly left behind. There was no one on either side of them for some distance.

"I'm determined to make good, Miss Boardman," Carey concluded. "But it seems such a long road. I don't know—there's something wrong with me, I guess. I lied to you this morning. That's not a bit so about Ben Mercy and the Occident Art Editor giving me work. That was an awful lie. I guess I wanted to make you think I was making a big success."

The girl turned abruptly toward him, her hands extended impulsively till her finger tips touched his sleeve.

"I'm glad you've said that," she replied. "I knew that wasn't so, because Anna had told me about the monograms. It hurt me to have you think I was the kind of person with whom that would count. Why, when Anna first told me about you, I wanted to meet you right away, just because you were a beginner and had your success to win. I know how hard it is to make a success in your profession. Do you suppose I should have the least cared about knowing you if Anna had told me you were getting all the work you could handle from Ben Mercy and the Occident man?"

"I hate pretence," she went on vehemently. "People who try to bluff never get anywhere; they never fool anybody. By and by bluffing becomes a disease, and they begin to bluff themselves, and then they become laughing-stocks to all their friends."

"I wish somebody would take me out and kick me round the block," said Carey.

"Now, don't let what I've said bother you. It's as though you'd never said it, and we're better friends be-

cause you did. Why, I really want to help you, and I believe I can."

"You're awfully good," said Carey, gratefully.

"Would you mind," she continued, "if I spoke to Mr. Sherman about you and asked him to let you come in and have a talk with him, when he had the time?"

"Mind!" exclaimed Carey. "Why, Miss Boardman, I'd give anything to get a real criticism from a man like Sherman. I want to know what the trouble with my stuff is. . . . You haven't any idea what this talk with you has meant to me. I've been frittering away my time, fooling round with Jerry Hart and the fellows at the boarding house and not doing a thing. Talking to you has brought back all the keen desire to get in and work that I had when I first arrived in New York. That isn't six months ago, and yet it seems as though I was an entirely different man now."

"Well," the girl said, "I shan't have any difficulty in making an appointment with Mr. Sherman. I'll speak to him on Monday, and then I'll telephone Anna, and she can tell you when to come. Mr. Sherman has done a thousand little kindnesses for me, and he's always doing good to others. I know, because he dictates his personal letters to me and, d'you know, he gives away nearly half his salary every month?"

For some time the two had been walking about the deck. The *Narragansett* was opposite the Speedway, and those who would disembark at One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street were beginning to gather their things together. Many who had occupied the decks now found the cabins more comfortable, for a sharp afternoon wind had sprung up, freshening with the lengthening shadows. Carey and Jane Boardman practically had their promenade about the deck unimpeded.

Suddenly the girl stopped and held up her hand.

"Listen!" she commanded.

Faintly but distinctly there came to their ears the unmistakable accents of Anna's voice. She was crying bitterly, and they caught the reproachful tone and the words:

"Jerry! Oh, my darling! Oh, Jerry!"

As though drawn by a magnet, Carey's eyes found the porthole just above their heads. He felt his heart leap and his eyes widen with the excitement that suddenly possessed him. Miss Boardman's gaze, he knew, was fixed upon his face.

"What is it?" she whispered. "Wasn't that Anna's voice?"

"No." He struggled to regain his self-control. "Somebody's seasick, I guess. . . . Would you mind if I smoked a cigarette? I don't think anybody'd object now. Every one's gone upstairs. Let's go watch the wake again."

As he passed down the deck toward the steamer's stern, he involuntarily glanced over his shoulder. As if to furnish the last bit of corroborative evidence, in the scuppers against the rail, between two folding stools at the spot where they had just been standing, lay a broken and forgotten yellow shoe box, in which a lunch had once been packed. It was the same box Carey remembered having seen in the woman's lap when he had peered out through the porthole of the stateroom that morning.

CHAPTER VIII

THE next few days were full of perplexity for Carey. He was beset with one unfamiliar emotion after another. He had never been impressed with sin before. The principles of character he respected were those allied with such virtues as kindness, unselfishness, generosity, respect for the aged and consideration for the feelings of others. His mother had so intensely impressed upon him the evils of drink that he considered men who constantly required stimulants to carry them through a day's work as but a step removed from being weak-willed and degenerate. Intoxication when, in his own mind, the occasion justified it, was not so reprehensible. All good fellows got "jagged" at times. Besides this, he had a code of honour,—a peculiar, man's code, which was variable and elastic. It was the code of other men he knew,—his associates back home and his new acquaintances in New York. This code, as far as women were concerned, demanded him to hold in contempt men who resisted the overtures of the other sex, but at the same time to condemn those who took advantage of a woman's weakness and first robbed her of her virtue.

There was little doubt but that Jerry had seduced Anna; and the thought of his wanton selfishness in taking advantage of the poor, simple, loving girl, filled Carey with indignation. There were no palliating circum-

stances. Jerry had played upon her obvious love of him to gratify a moment's passion. It made Carey sick. Like an iron at white heat, the incident burnt itself into his mind and soul.

Had its effect been only that of horror and disgust, Carey's character might have gained additional strength and his nature a detestation for vice. He lost nothing in the termination of his friendship with Jerry Hart. Even Carey had recognised its demoralising influence. Further association with him, of course, was now impossible.

Unfortunately, a far more important result of the affair was the effect upon him sexually. It was like the touch upon a switch-board that set the machinery of this hitherto subconscious side of his nature in operation. Suddenly he became sexually alive. He was possessed with morbid thoughts and an unwholesome curiosity to know just what had taken place in that state-room, how Jerry had enticed Anna there, whether he had done so deliberately, or whether the poor girl, submitting to his embraces, had awakened his desires. Constantly there rang in his ears Anna's reproachful cry: "Jerry! Oh, my darling! Oh, Jerry!"

Carey was naturally pure minded. The trend of his thoughts distressed him profoundly. He struggled to shake them from him; but the presence of both Jerry and Anna in the house constantly supplied new fuel for his imagination. The possession of this secret affected him like a noisome pestilential fungus upon his hitherto clean soul.

Incessantly he watched them. At first, he avoided Jerry with natural revulsion. The day following the excursion—a Sunday—Jerry had spent visiting some acquaintances who lived in Summit, New Jersey. Carey

did not see him again till Monday's supper hour. He thought he detected the quick, significant glance that passed between Jerry and Anna when the former entered the dining room.

To Carey, Anna seemed wonderfully self-controlled. Occasionally, he thought others would surely recognise the transparent love that shone out of her eyes when she met Jerry's gaze. Otherwise, she seemed her happy, unaffected self.

In his own mind was going on the agitation that should have been theirs. He could not cease speculating on the outcome of events. He could not sleep. In the night, for long hours, he lay awake, going over the affair, imagining what had happened between them, hearing again and again Anna's reproachful cry.

As to how much Jane Boardman had understood, he was undecided. She was aware that the voice they had heard was Anna's; but Carey was almost certain she had failed to catch Anna's words. Her attitude at the time had been to protect her friend from their unintentional eavesdropping. That a girl so young, and so obviously innocent, should be in any way mixed up in such a sordid affair distressed him. Anna was at least eight years her senior. Jane Boardman was not more than a year or so out of her teens. If the episode had made so powerful an impression upon himself, what would be its effect, Carey wondered, upon a mind so tender and pure as this young girl's?

He tried to persuade himself, since she had betrayed no sign of agitation at the moment, her composure indicated that she had not understood the situation.

In the unhealthy state of Carey's mind there germinated a morbid desire for Anna's company. At first this

took the form of spying upon her. Jerry Hart, on Wednesday, left for a ten days' trip up the state. About once in two months, the graphite company that employed him sent him off on one of these salesman tours. Jerry hated to make them; but Carey suspected that this particular trip was suggested by Jerry himself.

His absence at this time was a great relief to Carey, who foresaw that an explanation of his attitude would, sooner or later, be expected. With Jerry absent, his own curiosity as to Anna's movements abated and, in place of this shabby inquisitiveness, there arose within his heart a genuine affection for her.

Whether it was because he was Jerry's friend, or because his new kindliness and sympathy attracted her, or because his knowledge of her secret made him seem to her miraculously considerate and thoughtful, Anna turned to Carey after Jerry's departure as if she found in him the only relief from the confusion of her thoughts. She was different with him than when she was with Jerry. She rarely laughed, and to Carey this was a welcome change, for often her senseless mirth annoyed him. Long silences occurred between them, and, when they spoke, it was generally Jerry whom they discussed. He was the subject uppermost in both minds, and neither seemed to weary of talking about him, arguing over his traits of character, analyzing his nature. It became customary for them to sit on the brown stone steps of the boarding house after dinner for these talks, and often it was nine o'clock and after before they went in. Sometimes they walked about the block as far as Fourteenth Street and back. In their arguments concerning Jerry, it was invariably Carey who criticised him, assailing his weaknesses and condemning his selfishness, and Anna who defended him. It became apparent to Carey that he was

nurturing in his heart a steadily growing dislike for his recent friend. When the first feeling of repulsion had passed, Carey feared that his feelings toward him had undergone no radical change. After Jerry's departure, this dislike of him, which Carey felt was engendered by his talks with Anna, was a source of much gratification to him. Carey was at that state of adolescence when introspection occupied a great deal of his thoughts when alone, but in the present instance, he failed, for the most part, to analyze clearly either his feelings or his emotions.

Alone at night in his room, sometimes gazing into the dim shadows that flickered across the white ceiling above his head as he lay in bed, or staring for long minutes at his own reflection in his mirror, Carey tried to understand himself. His increasing interest in Anna and his change of heart toward Jerry puzzled him. At first, he told himself that these arose from a sense of pity and righteous indignation—the natural feelings of any man in his position. But, delving into the inner recesses of his heart and dissecting his emotions, he was not sure that they did not emanate from a jealousy that was becoming daily more acute, and a morbid attraction for the girl who had played a weak and adulterous part with his friend.

Toward the end of the week, Anna received a note from Jane Boardman saying that Mr. Sherman would be glad to see Mr. Williams any afternoon after three. Carey waited until the following Tuesday and, with his portfolio under his arm, once more found himself in the outer office of the Consolidated Press Syndicate.

He was given no opportunity to cool his heels on this occasion. Almost immediately, Mr. Sherman sent word to "show him in," and, when Carey entered his office, held out his hand with a hearty welcome.

"Well, let's see your proofs, young man," he said cheerfully. "Miss Boardman tells me you have been having a hard time of it. New York's a pretty stiff place, and you came here about the worst possible time of the year to take hold."

He spent about ten minutes looking at the samples Carey had to show. Then he settled back into his swivel arm-chair and relit the stump of a cigar that had been allowed to go out on the edge of his desk.

"Mr. Williams," he said, hugging one knee and teetering back and forth in his squeaky chair, "the trouble with you beginners is that you don't offer anything we fellows want to buy. Some time I'm going to write a little book and call it *A Plea for the Down-Trodden Art Editor*. Almost every one believes the Art Editor of a publishing house should be a patron of the Arts and buy things that are shown him, just because they have merit. Now, I'm employed here by the owners of this magazine to buy stuff that can be used in it, or order work from men I know can produce it. Along come you with a stack of proofs of your own work. But what have you got to show me? Reproductions of wash illustrations for railway folders, a poster, some sketches of interesting bits of landscape,—that's about all! Doesn't it strike you as preposterous?

"Now, let me finish!" Sherman continued, as Carey attempted to interrupt. "You've come to me for advice, and I'm feeling particularly good this afternoon, and I'm going to give it to you straight from the shoulder. You were going to say that you didn't come here hoping to get a commission, but to have me tell you what was the matter with your stuff and how to go about getting a commission from some one. Now, wasn't that what you were going to ask?"

Carey smiled his admission.

"Well, now,—you represent a *type*. You think you are different, but you're not. You are an excellent type of the beginner who starts out to try to become an illustrator. Now, I represent the *type* of Art Editor. Here we are,—you and I,—let's thrash this out together. First, remember I'm here to buy material for the Consolidated Press Syndicate. It's up to you to bring me something I want to buy. Don't get any notion in your head that, on the strength of what you show me, I'm going to give you a story to illustrate! I've got a dozen to twenty big illustrators that I've got to support. You smile,—but that's literally true. Let's see. Take your friend, Gregory Shilling. He counts on six or ten yarns from me every year to illustrate. He does satisfactory work. I'm always pleased with what he brings me. Take John Cameron Wilson, Castle Jerome, Henry Lyell, Myron Davis, Mary Sanders Smart, Bonestell and Warfield, and Mason Edward Camp—all of them get work from me and are entitled to keep on getting it as long as their work is satisfactory. How would you feel, Mr. Williams, after you had built up a reputation and a market by hard, sincere, conscientious work, if the Art Editors to whom you had given the result of your best endeavours should hand out their assignments to youngsters whose work showed promise, even admitting they could turn out work as satisfactory?"

"But how does one ever get a start?" demanded Carey, struck with Sherman's words.

"That, my dear boy," the other replied kindly, "no one but yourself will discover. What you first want to do is to study the magazines until you are familiar with what is wanted. You know the kind of illustration you do the best. If you don't,—find out. Then determine the

periodical that uses your kind of material the most. Now, we publish a great many Western stories calling for cowboys and mining camps and cattle ranges. Gregory Shilling and Mason Edward Camp generally do these for me. *Overman's* wants sea pictures; and you know the magazines that are devoted to women's interests. Pick out one that you think would be most likely to use your work, and then try to sell 'em something, always going to them with material they can use. Take one of the stories they have already published, read it and study it, and illustrate it yourself in your own way, and then take it to them and say, 'Look here, Mr. Art Editor, these pictures I drew to illustrate a story in your last February issue. You remember so-and-so drew the pictures for it, but this is what I would have shown you if you had given it to me. Now, sir, on the strength of these pictures of mine, do you think you can give me a story to illustrate on speculation?'

"Then, you see," Mr. Sherman continued, "you're offering him something he can appraise. I've given that piece of advice to several hundred artists in my time, and, as far as I know, not one of them has ever followed it. They say, 'Oh, I haven't the time,' or 'I can't afford model hire.' But they hang on for months without work, which is much more expensive. Of course, you can attempt a cover design and send it to the various magazines that might use it. But selling a cover design is the hardest thing I know of, and I should advise you not to waste your time trying it. When it comes to a cover, our circulation manager knows much more about what makes a good one than I do. Obviously the artist knows even less."

"Now, in regard to your work itself, Mr. Williams," Sherman went on, picking up Carey's proofs, "there's

not very much I can say. This is the kind of material that would get you more railway folders to illustrate. It indicates that you can do this sort of work fairly well. You know how to handle a vignette interestingly, and you have a certain sense of composition; but it's all commercial—advertising stuff. It's hard and tight; there's no feeling in it whatsoever. Now, this poster. You've got an eye for colour values; but, again, your composition is all too tight. You're muscle-bound, if you know what I mean. Your style is cramped and—Hello, what's this? I didn't see this before. Is this yours?"

He held up the pastel sketch of Jerry Hart that Carey had recently finished.

"It's a friend of mine. I did it only the other day," he said.

"Well, this has freedom and quality, and you've caught a rare expression. That's good—excellent. Of all your work this alone seems to indicate you could do something beyond the ordinary."

He continued to study the sketch for some minutes.

"Why don't you develop a technique?" he asked. "I suppose that's easy to suggest and rather difficult to do. The reason I mention it to you is that most—I might say almost all—of the modern illustrators who are extremely popular have developed a technique. Often it is their technique that is popular—not their work. There's Castle Jerome; his work is executed too rapidly to be anything but sketchy; frequently his draughtsmanship is so faulty his figures are grotesque; but he's popular because of his unusual technique. I think, outside of Sargent, he is, oddly enough, the finest water-colourist now living; but he's not known on that account at all. Charles Hanna Simpson, the best-known of all the illustrators and a great artist as well, has a pronounced technique. He is

generally imitated but he is clever enough to change his style faster than his imitators can follow. Technique, style, manner of presentation would help you sixty per cent of the way."

"How—how does one go about developing a technique?" asked Carey, after a few minutes' pause.

Sherman shrugged his shoulders.

"There's a well-known landscape painter—I forget his name—who spreads two canvases the same size with the predominating colours in a woodland scene. He squeezes the paint from his tubes onto the canvases and then rubs the canvases one against the other until the colours are all mixed together. While the paint is still wet, he indicates a brook in the foreground, or a gnarled trunk of a tree in the middle distance, or a suggestion of blue sky through the foliage, and leaves the rest to the imagination. That's one way. That particular one has the advantage of making two pictures at the same time! Technique is often nothing more than a trick. Bonestell puts his colours on with his palette knife; Perry Maxwell rubs his in with the ball of the thumb. Benjamin Acker works from photographs instead of models, and as a result there is a predominating sharp contrast between his shadows and high-lights in all his pictures, which in my opinion is unfortunate and extremely tiresome. He has developed a technique only suitable to illustrations calling for plenty of action; his style limits him; he will never do anything of importance because he has used unfair methods. Some ways are recognised to be legitimate; others are obviously tricks. A trick or a 'stunt' will get you nowhere. Even the public will recognise you to be a faker, and you can not prevent others from imitating your trick. Of course if you can conceal it it may serve you for a time. Every one is wondering about

Camden-Forbes and how he gets the effects he does in Russian charcoal; some day his secret will be discovered and that will be the end of him. Develop your technique honestly and you will be respected."

Carey's heart was aflame as he walked out of the offices of the Consolidated Press Syndicate. The inspiration lasted for many days, during which he worked harder than he had ever done in his life. He seriously tried to invent a technique, although, in his heart, he knew that such a thing was the result of slow development, or of inspiration.

At the end of his ten days' trip, Jerry Hart came home. Carey had been dreading his return, fearful of what might attend his presence in the house again. Little seemed to result. Observing them closely, Carey failed to detect any display of feeling in either him or Anna. She was once again her happy, silly, amused self, laughing in soundless convulsions at Jerry's nonsense. No pangs of conscience evidently troubled him. Carey marvelled at his composure and easy assurance. His casual, flippant manner and deliberate efforts to make Anna laugh were as natural and as unconcerned as ever.

On the second evening after his return, Jerry did not come home for dinner, and Anna also was absent from the table. Miss Watt explained that Anna had been invited to supper with the deaconesses; there was to be an affair at the church, and every one was working for it. Carey sat on the steps after dinner, consuming one cigarette after another, waiting for Anna to return, his turbulent heart aching with jealousy. At ten-thirty, he caught sight of her walking up Sixteenth Street from the direction of St. George's, prim and sedate, with a baffling air of innocence and artlessness. She was full of plans

for the Sunday School entertainment, and Carey began to have misgivings as to the correctness of his suspicions, when Jerry appeared, too obviously approaching from the opposite direction.

Carey, stricken with the damning confirmation of what he both feared and wished to prove, left them abruptly and went up to his own room, locking the door against a possible visit from Jerry.

The night that followed he never forgot. Hour after hour he wrestled with himself, despising his own weakness, raging in jealous fury at Jerry's contemptibleness and lightly worn favours, torturing himself by alternately wanting and detesting Anna. He did not understand his suddenly aroused animal desires, the clamour of sex within him. He had been singularly spared up to the present time this distressing experience of youth. He was sick with loathing of himself.

Gazing from his open window for long intervals at the black shadows of the shuttered houses across the street, the chill night wind blowing upon his bare chest where his nightgown hung unbuttoned at his throat, or forcing his mind to grasp the sense from the pages of a book or magazine, resorting to one futile subterfuge after another, exerting what will power was left him to distract his thoughts,—all was of no avail to rid him of the agitation that swept his heart and brain. At a quarter to two, he dressed and let himself noiselessly out of the house. He walked as far as Stuyvesant Square, and sat for a while upon one of the deserted benches. It was very cold, and presently he was forced to walk again to keep warm. The excitement within him gave not an instant's peace. With shut teeth and nails biting his palms, he kept repeating her name over and over: "Anna—Anna—Anna." As he walked about, he was frequently ap-

proached and accosted by poor, wretched women, as miserable as he. Their pitiable attempt to simulate high spirits and their invitations to him to share with their poor, wasted brains and bodies a time of fun and frivolity, sickened him. He turned away shuddering. He bought a drink at a Third Avenue saloon, and wearily sought his room. It was a little after three. He undressed and went to bed, and fiercely tried to compel himself to sleep. At four o'clock he was again pacing his room, eight steps to the closet door, eight steps back again to the windows. Slowly the passion within him wore him out, pursuing him until, from sheer exhaustion, he fell across his bed and slept.

He woke the next morning to find big Joe Downer smiling down upon him, his black wide-brimmed hat pushed back upon his scraggy hair, his bulging, battered straw valise beside him on the floor. Carey sat up dazed, bewildered, trying to adjust matters. For a moment neither spoke, Joe continuing his smiling contemplation, Carey returning his look, his eyes searching the other's face in puzzled inquiry. His head and back were aching, his eyes smarted, his mouth was hot and leathery. Abruptly the recollection of his long vigil came upon him. Shakily he rose to his feet.

"Oh, my God, Joe, I'm glad you've come," he said, and put his arms about the other's shoulders, sinking like a tired child against the rough texture of his coat.

"Well, kid! Well, kid!" exclaimed Joe, "why, what's the trouble? I've been watching you asleep there for almost five minutes. They told me to come right up. I only got in half an hour ago."

"How's mother?" asked Carey, without raising his head.

"Fine. I tried to persuade her to come. I told her we'd surprise you. But she said she was afraid of the trip—of the weather—of this thing and that. You know your mother, Carey."

Carey was finding too much comfort in the heartening circle of Joe's arm to make an effort to reply. Presently, he said:

"I'm all in this morning. I've got a splitting head,—neuralgia in my neck. I had a hell of a night last night. . . . I'll be all right as soon as I shoot some bromo into me."

"Been hitting her up?" asked Joe.

Carey pulled away from him a moment, an indignant denial upon his lips. Then, at the thought of what an explanation entailed, he nodded, and slipped back upon the bed, his elbows upon his knees, thrusting his long fingers through the tangle of his yellow hair.

Joe regarded him silently, compassionately, lovingly. Carey knew that Joe had that humble, dog look in his eyes that had always irritated him.

He jumped up, drawing his bath robe around him, and turned toward the door.

"I'll take a quick bath, Joe, and be back in a jiffy. Unpack your duds and put 'em where you can find room. You know,—it's just the same as when we were living together."

He dropped the door knob a moment and came toward the other, putting a hand on either of Joe's shoulders.

"Joe," he said, his voice husky and constrained, "I never was so glad to see any one in all my life. You couldn't have timed your visit better. You're like the Rock of Gibraltar, Joe. . . . I'll don my Broadway trappings and we'll have a grand old time doing New York!"

And a very memorable time it was—a fortnight in both their lives of irresponsibility and happiness, supplying memories of theatrical orgies, jolly midnight suppers, and long, light-hearted days roaming about the city—which each one was long to cherish. From Joe Downer's shoulders a mantle of repression seemed to drop, and Carey, giving himself entirely into Joe's hands, opening his heart to him, discussing the emotions that bothered him, winning away the morbidness of his thoughts, felt like a foul rag washed clean. During Joe's visit, he lost his interest in Jerry and Anna completely and, being rarely home at meal times, saw but little of them. He told Joe about the whole affair and its malign effect upon himself. Joe was unable to give advice that could be of any possible help to Carey, but the boy anticipated this before he told him. Joe always acted like a sharp breeze on the foggy atmosphere of Carey's mind. His vision cleared, distortions vanished. Whatever Carey might decide to do, Joe's abiding faith in him never faltered. Joe would reply to Carey's involved diagnosis of his state of mind:

"Well, kid, that way of thinking won't bring you anywhere. Why don't you go away for a while? Can't you make up your mind to think about something else? Why don't you change your boarding place?"

CHAPTER IX

AFTER Joe's departure, Carey devoted himself with grim determination to his Art. At a second-hand book store he bought up some old copies of the weekly published by the Consolidated Press Syndicate and read a number of the stories. Two of these appealed to him, the illustrations for which struck him at the same time as particularly inadequate, and he proceeded to make his own pictures for them. Whether it was Sherman's encouragement or the wholesome influence of Joe's visit that supplied the incentive, Carey felt that he never had done better work. The compositions came easily and his drawing was sure, and seemed to be less tight than it had ever been. One set of illustrations he worked up in Russian charcoal, the other in wash. He was fortunate in securing the right models as well. He hired the old organ-grinder who invariably paid the boarding house its Saturday visit, and pressed McNeil as well as one of the Fillmore children into model service. His work thrilled him. He rose early to get his monograms finished and out of the way that he might begin on his illustrations the sooner. He applied himself to it as long as the afternoon light lasted, and in the evening sat before his drawing board, until ten and sometimes eleven o'clock, touching up his day's work here and there where he dared, studying what he had already finished, determining to-

morrow's plans. Just before he turned out the gas, he always arranged the drawing he was at work upon so that it would catch the best morning light and be the first thing his eye rested upon when he awoke. It seemed to him that he was able to get at that moment a fresher point of view than at any other time during the day.

He decided to do three pictures for each story. The set for the first gave him no trouble at all; but the second supplied difficulties. It called for one composition with three women; and this Carey blocked in five times before it seemed to promise to come right. Then the right models failed him entirely. He spent hours in Stuyvesant Square surreptitiously sketching the nursemaids, selecting those whose attitudes came nearest to fitting his composition. In desperation he even called up Gregory Shilling on the telephone, to ask him where satisfactory professional models could be had. The artist was not in town, however, and Carey faced the prospect of failing to complete the pictures for the second story and taking Sherman the ones for the first alone, when it occurred to him that Anna might be willing to pose. He had seen very little of her since Joe's departure. Being engrossed in his work, he had thought of nothing else. Jerry was again away. He had been gone about a week. How much his one-time companion felt he suspected, Carey did not know, but others in the house observed there was a breach between them, and Carey was sure that Jerry himself recognised the fact that their friendship was at an end. That his former chum made no effort to straighten matters out and re-establish their old intimacy, seemed proof that he feared Carey was somehow aware of his criminal behaviour, and that any overtures on his part toward renewing their old companionship would be useless.

Anna readily agreed to pose for Carey, on the understanding that the model-hire he offered her should go to a church fund in which she was deeply interested. She proved an excellent model, and Carey began to make rapid progress with his work.

Faintly at first, then with increasing intensity, the old physical attraction of the girl came back upon him. The posture he asked her to assume demanded a half sitting, half reclining attitude. She sat upon the edge of the couch, her chin upon the heel of her palm, her elbow thrust into a pile of cushions, the other hand resting lightly upon her hip. She possessed undeniable grace and, as Carey studied her, drawing in the lines of her figure, the passion he had struggled against once more seized upon him.

He was greatly tempted to prolong the sittings. Anna, silent, still, her face and body in repose, was infinitely more attractive and alluring than Anna giggling, hoydenish, betraying the vacuity of her mind. As the minutes passed one by one, a spell seemed to emanate from her and enfold him in a revery of sensuous intoxication. Sometimes long intervals would elapse without his adding anything to the picture. When Anna would abruptly sit up to rest, it suggested to Carey the destruction of something beautiful with attending ugly noises. Something repulsive interposed—loveliness vanished. He used to hope that Anna would not speak during these intermissions. Until she assumed her pose again, he applied himself closely to his work. She always did commit herself, however, invariably vapid, or she would come round behind his chair to look at his work and exclaim:

"Oh, that doesn't look a bit like me, Mr. Williams!"

Carey's conscience told him, clamouring at first, that this sexual thought-indulgence was sure to have a perni-

cious effect. He held long arguments with himself about it, telling himself that it could only last until the drawings were completed, and assuring himself, if it continued to torment him, he would move to another boarding place. After one of Anna's visits to his room he would feel utterly exhausted. It was all wrong, unnatural and morbid. Gazing at his own reflection in the mirror, he would burst out disgustedly at the image:

"Faugh,—you're a beast, Carey Williams! A dirty beast!"

It was one day when Carey was putting the finishing touches on the last of the figures for which Anna was posing that the girl suddenly crumpled up and fell, a sobbing, quivering little heap upon the couch. She had been standing gazing out of the window, one hand upon a chair back, one knee upon the couch. At first Carey thought that the strain of holding the pose had been too much for her. Uncertainly he rose. Anna gave herself up utterly to her grief, her hands twisting and knotting, her body convulsed with sobbing, while, between her gasping breaths, she moaned piteously. Carey was frightened. He hurriedly poured a glass of water and, kneeling beside the couch, tried to persuade her to drink it. But Anna seemed unable to hear him. She had collapsed as though something within her had suddenly broken. Her complete abandon was almost shameless. Carey felt he could not bear to witness it, and started for the door with a vague idea of calling Mrs. Fillmore or Miss Watt, when, between Anna's sobs, he caught a tone of supplicating entreaty and the words:

"My Jerry!"

A surge of relief and sympathy swept over him. Instinctively he returned to where she lay, and sat down

beside her, awkwardly but gently stroking her tumbled hair.

"I know," he said to her, "I know all about it, Anna dearest! Don't cry, my darling. He's not worth your tears."

The endearments sprang too readily to his lips. The contact of his hand upon her neck set his heart pounding; his fingers trembled in his excitement. Closer he bent over her, whispering his words of comfort in her ear.

"Anna, my darling. Don't cry about him. He's a skunk, Anna. I'll take care of you—don't cry that way, dear—can't you stop? Oh, Anna! Don't—*don't*, dearest,—I love you so!"

Incoherencies, words—a torrent of murmuring poured from him. His eyes brimmed with the hot tears of his sympathy. He put his arms about her and drew her to him. Presently his clumsy, soothing caresses had their effect and Anna lay quietly in his arms, her body shaken now and then with spasmodic quivers, her wadded handkerchief pressed against her eyes, her lips trembling with each intake of breath.

Soon she had gained sufficient control of herself to whisper:

"He's not coming back, any more!"

Abject grief once more possessed her, and Carey, his heart torn with the surge of pity that swept over him, found himself in a mad excess of emotion, kissing her cheek, her hand, her forehead, drawing her limp and unresponsive body to him, crushing her in his arms.

The force of his embrace hurt her and she cried out, protesting. Carey released her, his senses swimming, his breath coming in short gasps, his whole body shaking. He buried his face in the hot, moist palms of his hands;

and so the two remained for some time, until Anna began to speak again.

"He wrote Mamma Muggins to send his things. He said he was going to live in Detroit. . . ." She flung up her head suddenly. "I—I *won't* give him up!" she said between shut teeth.

Once more she gave way to her grief.

That she should desire some one else, when she seemed so infinitely desirable herself, was maddening to Carey. He was full of a great, overwhelming pity for her. Poor old Anna! At the moment it seemed to him that no sacrifice on his part would be too great to save her from this pain and sorrow. The hot blinding tears sprang into his eyes. With a bursting sob, he turned to her again, burying his face against her shoulder, trying to gather her in his arms.

But Anna seemed unconscious of his emotion. She suffered his caresses as though they had been bestowed by a child. They were inconsequential. Every now and then her body shook with a long, quivering sigh. She remained quiet, her eyes closed, one hand pressing against them the little wadded handkerchief.

Suddenly there were steps outside the door, and a knock, followed by Mrs. Charley Fillmore's voice:

"Mr. Williams! . . . Mr. Williams! . . . Here's a telegram for you."

For an instant, Carey and Anna gazed at one another, their eyes widening. Then both of them struggled to their feet, Anna busy with her hair and disordered dress, Carey rubbing his tear stained face upon the sleeves of his shirt, pulling his cravat about his collar into place. But, before he could find his voice to answer Mrs. Fillmore, there came again her summons, the knob turned, the door was pushed open, and Mrs. Fillmore peered in.

"Mr. Williams? Oh, I beg your pardon. I thought you might have gone. . . ."

At this point her eyes rested upon Anna. Swiftly she took in the girl's agitation and the disarray of her hair and clothes. Carey, like a sparrow caught by a snake, watched her, dumb and fascinated, as her eye travelled with lightning speed to him, to the couch, back to Anna, and finally to him. He saw the face of Charley's wife grow white and red, and then suddenly sharpen like a rat's, her eyes closing to half slits, her nostrils faintly quivering. The silence of all three was sufficient to arouse in the most guileless of minds a suspicion that something was wrong. Mrs. Fillmore was the first to recover herself. She approached Carey and held out the yellow envelope of the telegram.

"This came—just now," she said in a voice obviously controlled. "I brought it up myself."

"Thank you," Carey murmured, taking it from her.

Without further comment, the woman turned and left the room. Anna bowed her head upon the marble mantelpiece, her shoulders convulsed with silent weeping. Even at that constrained moment, Carey had time to think how much alike she was in mirth and grief,—inarticulate, shaking silently. He went to her, his arms outstretched, but, at the first touch of his fingers, she shrank from him and went swiftly out of the room.

Carey followed her into the hall and watched her down the stairs until she disappeared, and he heard the abrupt closing of a door. His head was still swimming as he turned back into his own room, gazing vacantly at the telegram in his hand. Mechanically he held the envelope to the light and tore off a strip at one end, shaking out the enclosure. As he spread out the yellow sheet of paper with its familiar printed heading, he was first

aware of the signature: "Mother." Then he read the message in the round hand of the operator:

My dearest boy, your father has passed on. I want to see you. I am ill and lonely. Come home and let us mourn him together.

Mother.

CHAPTER X

IT was after one o'clock when Carey got back to the boarding house. He had walked straight out Fifth Avenue to One Hundred and Tenth Street, and then had retraced his steps home. With the exception of half an hour at a Childs restaurant for his dinner, he had been walking steadily since five in the afternoon. The first snow of the year was falling and, to Carey's unfamiliar senses, it was wonderfully exhilarating. It gave him a delightful thrill to shuffle his feet in the drifts and to turn his face upward to catch the softly falling flakes upon forehead, cheeks, mouth and chin. He enjoyed eating it, too,—scraping off upon his gloved forefinger little piles and mounds of it from the iron fences where it gathered.

But, in spite of the excitement of the snow, he was aware of a profound feeling of depression. It was not due to any sense of grief at the thought of his father's death. He had changed to a white shirt and put on a black tie before he left the house, merely because it seemed the thing to do. The idea that his father was dead appealed to his sense of the dramatic. He wanted to grieve about it. He tried to recall the days of his boyhood, when his father had carried him on his shoulders round the library table, singing:

"I'm Cap-tain Jinks of the Horse Marines,
I feed my horse on corn and beans."

But it brought no sense of affection. He could remember many instances when his father had been good to him. He had a sincere admiration for his father. To Carey he appeared a fine standard of a man. But, with every tender memory of him, there were many more of his severity and harshness, particularly the one when the boy, returning home noisily from school, had encountered the gaunt, tragic figure of his father at the head of the stairs, one hand catching his scant nightgown together at the throat, the other holding the dripping ice-cloth.

His father was dead. Carey was now a half-orphan. With the knowledge of the world that his six months' residence in New York had given him, Carey speculated for the first time in his life upon the morality of his father's remarriage. He had heard that she was a woman with whose name much scandal had been connected, and that she had travelled with his father as his wife before the divorce had been granted. He knew she was a divorcée when his father met her. Beyond that there was nothing positive. Neither he nor his mother had heard directly from his father for ten years.

But the sense of depression that filled him as he scuffled the snow upon the pavement had nothing to do with his father,—nor with Anna—poor, silly, loving Anna. His thoughts went back to their interrupted afternoon. There would, of course, be no more sittings. It did not matter, as the drawings were practically done, and a day or so of work would finish them completely. He could show them to Sherman any time. The news of his father's death had somehow shaken off the effect that Anna had had upon him. Comparatively, it seemed a trifling matter.

There was little doubt in his mind that Mrs. Charley

Fillmore would try to put as evil a construction upon the situation as possible. They'd take it out on Anna. Poor old Anna! As if she didn't have enough to bear! What a contemptible cad Jerry was! Carey's fists knotted inside the pockets of his great coat as he strode along, and he shut his teeth fiercely.

He stopped under a street lamp and gazed up at the light through the blur of the white flakes. Slowly it came to him that the weight upon his heart was there because he must leave New York,—New York that he had so hated when he first walked its streets, the great, crouching beast that had seemed to be lying in wait to destroy him. The city had become infinitely dear to him, —it was a place for work, a place where success came readily; and he was on the threshold of success; he felt it. The work he had done for Sherman he knew was good. And now, to let it slip through his fingers just when he felt so sure of it. For a moment he considered writing his mother and telling her how impossible it would be for him to leave New York at just this time,—leaving her to "mourn" his father alone. He had his own life to live; it was unfair, it was unjust, to ask him to throw away this great chance that was all but within his grasp.

He gave this thought but a passing moment's consideration. He could not do it. His mother was his mother, and if she fancied his presence would be a comfort to her at this time, it was obligatory for him to go to her. It was characteristic of her, he thought, with some bitterness, as he turned homeward, that she expected him to finance his railroad fare. Where was he to get a hundred dollars to take him home? He would have to borrow

from poor old Joe Downer again—Joe, to whom he already owed twice the amount!

He was considering this when he reached the boarding house. The windows were all dark; the only light was in the hall, where the gas in the ornate chandelier had been turned down to a tiny bead. As he climbed the stairs, he realised he was tired in both limb and mind. The creaking of the treads beneath his feet sounded, in the dead silence of the house, like the cracking of whips. Involuntarily he paused by Anna's door. The faint radiance from the subdued gas jet in the hall on the second landing cast a quavering reflection on the wall. In the bathroom at the other end of the hall an intermittent drip fell from the leaky faucet into the half-filled basin. The dropping noise of the water sounded very musical; it was like a tune: plop-pleep-plat-plum-plat-pleep.

Carey reached his room and lit the Welsbach burner. Propped against a book on the marble mantel was an envelope addressed to him. Tearing it open, he was surprised to find it was from Anna.

Thank you for all you've done for me. I was not indifferent to your love, even if I could not return it. You have been very kind,—my only earthly friend. Jesus forgave Mary Magdalene, and I put my faith in Him. May we meet in Heaven.

ANNA.

In great red flaming letters there sprang before Carey's wide-staring eyes one hideous word. He read the note again and again, the note paper rattling in his trembling fingers. When and how? The passing minutes might

be precious. There was always the East River in which so many had found oblivion. There was poison—and he had heard of antidotes that had saved many a self-destroyer at the last minute. His mind was like a frightened rabbit. He found time in those dreadful moments of suspense to search his soul for whatever responsibility for this crime might be laid at his own door. He had sinned in his heart against the unhappy girl, but no more than that. Nevertheless, he felt guilty. The thought of flight, of getting away, silently, at once,—before any one knew, occurred to him. The impulse was instinctive.

But what to do? What to do? He kept repeating the words, his dry palms pressed against his cheeks.

He opened the door of his room and leaned over the banisters, gazing down into the black pit of the stairwell. Where had she gone to do it? How had she set about it? A wave of weakness swept over him; he gripped the rail to steady himself. The muscles of his diaphragm heaved convulsively. He set his teeth fiercely, trying to steady his nerves, to compel himself to meet the situation, to do the wisest, the most expeditious thing.

From below came the musical drip of water from the leaky faucet in the bathroom: plop-pleep-plat-plop-plip. Silently he stole down the stairs to the next landing and stood beside Anna's door. The house was very still. An early milk wagon hurried by in the street, the cans rattling. In the stillness, he could faintly hear the subdued, hoarse breathing of a sleeper on the floor below. Without premeditation, he tried the handle of Anna's door and gently pushed it open. He was trembling violently.

"Anna!" he whispered, and then a little louder, "Anna!"

The room was pitch dark and very close; the shade was drawn; no light entered from the street. For some time

Carey stood gazing into the utter blackness of the room, his hand upon the door knob. Again the feeling of great weakness possessed him. As he put his hand to his head to steady himself, the door knob, released from his grasp, sprang back to position with a sharp click. The sound brought his heart knocking into his throat. His knees shook under him. The fear that he was going to faint suddenly brought the needed strength. He fumbled in his vest pocket for a match, and lit it by drawing it sharply along the leg of his trousers.

Often, as he had passed Anna's door, in going up or down stairs, it had been open. He was familiar enough with the appointments; it was a hall bed-room, the same size as Doctor Floherty's, next to his own on the floor above. The bed or couch was behind the door. A walnut dresser faced it, its back to the opposite wall. This was covered with vases and toilet articles, pin trays and two or three tiny cushions, while, from the supports of the mirror, hung beribboned favours and embroidered bags for combings, a miscellaneous collection of little feminine articles. A small oval, marble-topped table was in the window recess, and several brightly illumined Scripture texts in square shiny black frames adorned the walls.

As he raised the quavering flame above his head, the dresser and the marble-topped table first disengaged themselves from the darkness. Across a rocking chair lay some white underclothing, neatly arranged. The bed was empty; the tasselled portière that served as a couch-cover was evenly folded across its foot.

There was no one there. The match-flame flared up and went out. As the darkness shut down upon him, Carey staggered out into the hall and began to scream. In that last flicker of the match, he had seen her where

she hung from the top hinge of the door, the congested face and the staring eye-balls on a level with his own.

There followed lights and many voices, figures in night robes and dressing gowns, the banging of doors and hurried feet upon the stairs. The hall was choked with pushing people who crowded past him where he knelt sobbing against the stair-rail. The clamour of voices rose louder and louder. Cries of "Doctor—Doctor" disengaged themselves from the hideous confusion. Some one—it was Washburn—was asking questions. Above the hideous racket he heard Miss Watt's shrill wailing. Mrs. Charley Fillmore, seated half way down the stairs, was trying to quiet her two little daughters. The tumult surged around him,—the hub-bub of it rose and fell and rose again, breaking out afresh after every lull. Presently McNeil and French were with him, the former's tousled hair falling into his eyes, the collar of his night-shirt sticking out above his overcoat. Between them he went up-stairs, their arms about him. Then he was in his room and Doctor Floherty was urging some whiskey upon him. After that, there came suddenly back upon him the memory of that awful face and the bulging eye-balls.

It was an unending night. People came into his room and stared at him and asked him questions. The mantle in the Welsbach burner glowed fiercely, the top of the cone a sooty black, like the mark from a dirty thumb. Then he was alone and the room was dark. Below he could hear the sound of women's weeping and, in the adjoining room, the subdued murmur of men's voices. As he turned upon his pillow, there in the blackness, so near his own, he saw again that face of agony and the white eye-balls, like spools starting from the head. Springing

from his bed, he blundered blindly out into the hall, and burst open the door of McNeil's room. There were several there, sitting about under the light, all looking at him.

"I can't stand it—being alone!" he cried.

"Here's something that will fix you up, Carey," a voice said. He drank the whiskey, and then he saw they had all been drinking it. Their chairs were grouped about the rickety little Japanese table on which the bottle and glasses stood.

"Feel better, boy?"

It was Durrant.

"Here, put this bath-robe on and sit here awhile with us. We're all shaken up over this thing."

Carey gazed about from face to face.

"Where's Doctor Floherty?" he asked.

No one answered him, but French made a downward motion with his finger, and Carey, who caught his meaning, sank shuddering into his chair. He found it impossible to follow their conversation, and lay back weak and with closed eyes while the talk went on.

Presently, every one got up, and Durrant, leaning over him, said:

"It's morning, Carey. We're going over to the *Westminster* for breakfast. Better get your clothes on and come along with us."

In a daze he dressed, and in a daze he followed them, and in a daze he lived through the events that followed. There was a visit from the coroner, and later the funeral at St. George's. He remembered afterwards that he had broken down while the rector was speaking about the girl who had lived her life for others. It was the recollection of that first Sunday they had gone to church together to listen to this same man preach that upset his

control. After the ceremony, he and Durrant, McNeil, French and Doctor Floherty stopped at a saloon to get a drink. Being of their party, he unconsciously followed them; but it struck him as both untimely and wanting in respect to her whose last rites they had just attended. Durrant had been a pall bearer and, in withdrawing his hand from his coat pocket, one of the white cotton gloves he had worn fell out upon the marble floor. It shocked Carey unspeakably.

Carey dreaded the explanation he knew he should be called upon to make. He was now all eagerness to start for home; impatiently he waited for Joe's response to his telegram for funds. First to French and McNeil and Doctor Floherty, and later, in a painful interview with Miss Watt, he accounted for his presence in Anna's room that night, and showed her Anna's message of farewell. He openly confessed to them his affection for her, and was obliged to speak of Jerry Hart's criminal behaviour. It was tale-bearing, and Carey cordially disliked the rôle. It seemed like defaming the virtue of one who could no longer defend herself. And yet there was no other course open to him. Silence would have implied his own guilt, and, by taking her life, Anna had admitted hers. It seemed outrageous that Jerry, the offender, should escape without bearing even a part of the sorrow that he alone had brought upon that house. Carey determined to write him and tell him what they thought of him.

Carey had seen little Jane Boardman at the funeral. Their meeting had taken place on the steps of St. George's as both were entering the church. There had been a rare look of sympathy and understanding in her eyes as he held her hand a moment.

"Come and see me, some time, won't you?" she said;

and Carey resolved to do so before he left for home, but he dreaded further discussion about Anna, and kept postponing the call from day to day.

He decided also to defer taking his drawings to Sherman until after his return to New York. The figures of the women in them suggested Anna in every curve and line, and reminded him accusingly of the morbid state of his mind when they had been drawn. It seemed a desecration to exhibit them.

Five days after the funeral, Joe's expected letter arrived. It contained the money order for a hundred dollars and a long, involved explanation of the delay which, shorn of Joe's cumbersome and wordy phrases, appeared to have been due to the fact that Joe was broke, as, unfortunately, his friends were also, and he had had a hard time borrowing the money, as every one needed it for Christmas. It was great to think of Carey's being home for the holidays, and his mother was counting the hours until then. The death of Carey's father had shaken her badly.

For the first time since the terrible night of Anna's death, Carey felt a lifting of the black depression that had been with him constantly. It had not occurred to him before that he was to be home at Christmas time. There was always a festival at the Pen and Brush Club, and he and his mother and Joe would have some pleasant times together.

He was singing the chorus of a popular song as he bent over the packing of his suitcase, when Mr. Blanchard walked into the room. Anna's father had been shaving, and some of the soap lather still adhered to one side of his face. He had removed his coat, and his collar

and tie. The unbuttoned vest disclosed the soiled bosom of a starched, crumpled shirt.

Carey was instantly aware that the old man was in the grip of some powerful emotion. His face was grey-white; the sockets beneath the tufts of grizzled eyebrows were like those of a skull; he was visibly shaking, while, with absurd little claw-like gestures, he plucked at the bone stud in the neck-band of his shirt. For some moments he regarded Carey, his lips moving tremulously. When he began to speak, his voice broke spasmodically.

"You—you can s-sing! You can *sing* now!" He repeated the words several times, nodding his head as if to confirm them. It occurred to Carey that the shock of his bereavement had touched the old man's mind. He tried to smile at him sympathetically. But Blanchard was intent upon his own thoughts.

"You damned scoundrel! You young whelp!"

Not so much the words as the biting hatred with which they were said, suddenly made Carey understand what was passing in the old man's mind.

He had felt so warm an affection and so deep a sympathy for Anna's father since her death that, to be suspected by him of being in any measure responsible for it, was unspeakably unkind and unjust. An indignant and angry flush rose to Carey's face.

"Before God, Mr. Blanchard, I am not the man you are looking for!"

"One of the many, then," snarled the old man.

"No—no—no!" cried Carey, "*that's not so!*" The coarseness of the accusation shocked him.

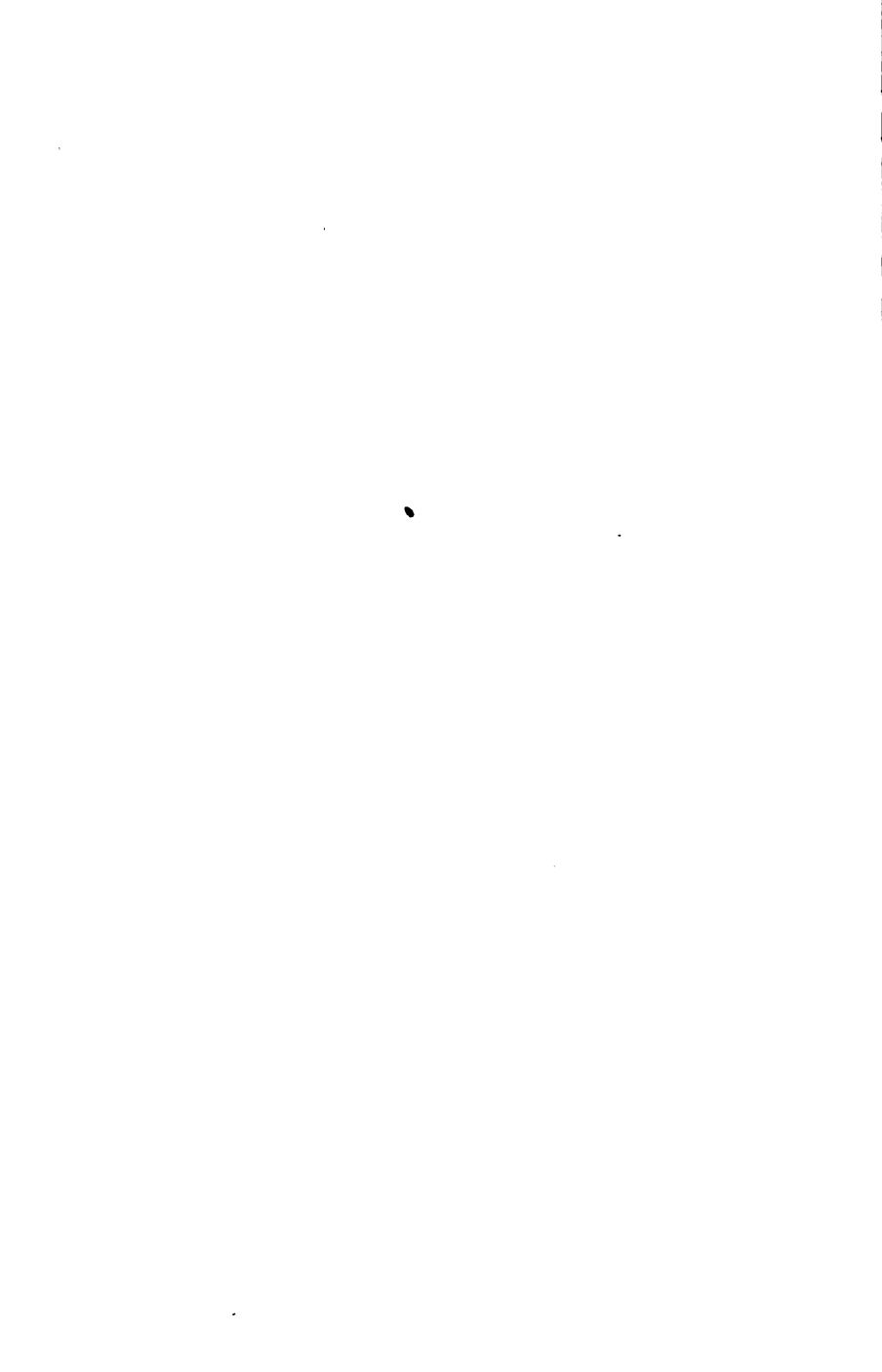
"You lie. Charley's wife caught you!"

Swift and vivid there rose before Carey's eyes the scene of his last interrupted afternoon with Anna. Once more he saw the face of Mrs. Charley Fillmore, as she stood

where Anna's father was now standing, grow white and red, and then sharpen like a rat's, the eyes closing to half slits, the nostrils quivering.

It was only a week ago; it seemed months!

PART TWO



PART TWO

CHAPTER I

IT was not until after he was at home that Carey learned his father had died in the *Hotel Breslin* in New York City. He and Jerry Hart had often gone there from the theatre for supper in the café. On the night that Princeton had beaten Yale in their annual football battle, he had helped some Princeton enthusiasts celebrate the victory into the early morning hours. His father had had a suite in the same hotel, and must have been ill at the very time Carey was boisterously singing in the café with his friends of the night. It was little more than a curious coincidence to him for a while. The first regret that entered his heart came unexpectedly with the advent of a letter from his father's attorneys.

Under his father's will he inherited twenty-two thousand dollars in five per cent bonds and all his personal effects, including his books and music.

The heritage staggered Carey at first. It brought a feeling of half pity, half affection, for the broken old man lying in pain and weakness upon his last bed of sickness, while his son rioted below under the same roof. His mother, who received nothing by the will, felt much aggrieved, and took the attitude that it would be disloy-

alty to her if Carey accepted the legacy. Even from beyond the grave, she feared Virgil Williams might wean her boy away from her. While Carey could not sympathise with her view, he appreciated only too well that, in taking the money, he would distress her. He decided, therefore, to refuse it.

Twenty-two thousand dollars meant nothing to him. He had never expected the money and, between the effect of the mental shock of Anna's death and the grateful, soothing quiet of being at home again, it mattered little to him who had it. He failed utterly to grasp the proportions of the inheritance. He wanted to please his mother. Carey was not analytical of his own sense of morality. He only felt vaguely that, in his old feeling for Anna, he had been wrong, almost as wrong as Jerry Hart. He felt that he had been tainted by the atmosphere in which Anna and Jerry moved. Now he was back in the old, clean air at home and, by refusing his legacy, he could please his mother, and, at the same time, impress Joe with his strength of character. Best of all, he could prove to himself that he was not weak. The satisfaction his mother plainly showed, and his own sense of virtuous self-sacrifice, were ample compensation.

He spent Christmas quietly and happily at home and succeeded in a measure in dispelling the gruesome memory of the unhappy events that had preceded his departure from New York. He had told Joe about the whole affair, but his mother attributed the change in him to the effect of his father's death. This nettled her. She was at pains to refer to her late husband, when obliged to do so, as "your unnatural father" or "that harsh and cruel man, your father." Carey tried to be patient and respectful; but at times it required all his self-control. He genuinely loved her and keenly regretted that she found so

much annoyance and irritation in the conduct of her business affairs. The property his father had deeded to her at the time of the separation still brought her in a comfortable living, but Carey was heartily glad he was no longer dependent upon her.

As the train whirled him back to New York, he had time to consider this and many other things. His first half year in the great metropolis had taught him certain hard lessons, and he had learnt something about life from them. He felt immeasurably older and better equipped to carve out his career. New York had become infinitely dear to him. Eagerly he looked forward to walking its streets again. He felt a certain proprietary interest in it; it was *his* New York,—a city to which he at last belonged, of which he was now a part, and which he was gradually coming to understand.

The *Hotel Imperial* he selected for his temporary quarters until he could find a proper boarding house. There was to be no return to Mamma Muggins'. Apart from the unpleasant association the house would always have, there was the bitterness of Blanchard, which others might have come to share.

He found what appeared to be a suitable boarding place on West Twenty-second Street just off of Fifth Avenue. There were three houses under the management of a Mrs. Lulu Brown who, he came soon to learn, was called "Babe" by every one she knew. She was a pretty woman, blond and buxom, who gave the boarders to understand from the outset that there was "no nonsense about her." She employed a housekeeper and ran her establishment on strictly business lines. Her boarders—their number varied from sixty to seventy-five—consisted chiefly of clerks, stenographers, professional suit-and-cloak models,

book-keepers, insurance agents, young brokers, an occasional actress, and one or two trained nurses. Of the entire number, there were only two married couples. Mrs. Brown ruled her boarders like a school mistress. No one was allowed to fall more than a week behind in his board money and, at the first word of gossip regarding any of those she housed, or the slightest suspicion that they were indulging in what she was pleased to describe as "philandering," she made it a rule to immediately request both offenders to leave her roof.

"No credit and no philandering in my house," she informed Carey with a brusque little nod of her head. "And you get real cream and eggs that ain't candled. We're both blonds, so we ought to get along."

Carey was fortunate in securing a fairly good room on the top floor. It was a hall bedroom, and he agreed to pay twelve dollars a week for it. This was more than he could afford, even if he got back his job of making monograms. But he was determined to work as he never had before, and rather enjoyed the stimulus that binding himself to twelve dollars a week gave him.

He sent over to Mamma Muggins for his trunk and drawing table and, when the expressman returned, it was with difficulty that he restrained himself until the men had left the room before opening the portfolios that contained his drawings, to examine again the two sets of pictures he had done for Sherman. He was rather pleased with them on the whole. They were not as good as he had hoped, but they were far better than his previous work.

On the following day, he took them over to Sherman's office. Two of the pictures were still incomplete, but he was too impatient to finish them.

Sherman was obviously pleased. He congratulated Carey on taking the advice he had given him.

"That shows hard, conscientious work, my boy," he said, patting Carey on the shoulder; "that's good stuff. They're better pictures, I'll admit, than the ones we ran. Although I must say," he continued with a twinkling glance at Carey, "that you picked out about the worst illustrations that ever appeared in the *Consolidated Weekly* to try to beat. However, you've satisfied me, and I promise you a yarn. I haven't got one just now, but the next one that comes in that I think you can do I'll send along."

Happy, with springing feet, his heart and mind atune to the tingling, crisp afternoon air, Carey fairly ran down the street. He felt success within his grasp, pre-ferment now but a matter of months.

The fact that Ackerman, of Marks and Heineman, refused to see him and sent out word that he gave no work to men he found to be unreliable, failed to quench his enthusiasm. It reminded him, however, that he had left New York without sending word to Ackerman of his intention, and now, he supposed, the Jew was sore. He told himself he would soon be independent of such "squirt" advertising agencies as Marks and Heineman, and, anyhow, it was too much for any one to expect him to have known what he was about during that last week in New York.

The next day, he started to make the round of the magazines again, showing the illustrations he had drawn at Sherman's suggestion. He did not think it amiss to say to the various Art Editors he was permitted to see:

"These are a couple of sets of pictures I've just finished for Mr. Sherman of the Consolidated Press Syndicate." It implied that he was exhibiting them before

they were delivered to the Consolidated Press, that they were the result of a genuine assignment.

The information had its effect. Art Editors gave him more attention and were more courteous to him, but none committed himself to anything further than asking him to leave his name and address again. It was the same with the advertising agencies. Two of the men he saw remembered him and asked him if he was not the artist who had at one time showed some reproductions of vignettes for railway folders. They all told him to come again and, although he failed to get any kind of a definite assignment, he felt that he had at least made progress toward gaining one. At length he sold one of the illustrations he had done for Sherman to a religious paper published in the Bible House. The picture happily illustrated a poem the editor of the children's department had on hand. He received five dollars for it. By the end of the second week, the money his mother had given him at Christmas was spent. "Babe" would allow him, he knew, a week's grace, but, at the end of that time, if his twelve dollars was not forthcoming, it was inevitable that he should find himself, bag and baggage, out on the sidewalk. It was after he had mustered up the necessary courage to telephone Sherman and ask if the yarn he had been promised had as yet put in an appearance and had been told that so far there was "nothing doing," that the thought of the legacy his father had left him came to him.

It was nine o'clock in the morning, and he was still in bed. The dining room in the basement closed at that hour, but Carey had decided to breakfast at a Childs restaurant on Twenty-third Street. For half-an-hour he had lain awake, his hands locked beneath his head, staring upwards at the discoloured ceiling above him, wondering where he was to raise the twelve dollars he already owed

and the twelve that he would owe for the week following, and the one following that, when it came upon him with a suddenness that brought him to the middle of the floor with a bound, that he was a rich man if he but wished to be one! Carey caught the reflection of his ruddy face and his mop of yellow hair in the mirror. He regarded his image dazedly for some moments, rubbing the bright bristle on his chin that had appeared since last he had shaved.

For the first time, he realised the proportions of what he had renounced so lightly. It had not seemed a real thing before. He had decided to refuse it as if it had been a paltry twenty-two dollars instead of twenty-two thousand! Twenty-two thousand! Why, it was *a fortune!* He recalled with a wave of relief that he had not even taken the trouble to reply to the attorneys' letter! The matter had seemed of too little importance. He could pay Joe Downer back the three hundred he owed him immediately, and it would not be necessary ever to tell his mother that he had accepted the money. She could be led to think that he had made it by his Art, and occasionally he could slip a hundred-dollar check into a letter to her as a present!

His mind leaped from one possibility to another. There was nothing he couldn't do! Money made everything possible. He could pay Babe her twelve, and bid her and her crowd of clerks and salesgirls good-bye forever, and he could have a studio of his own, with low book shelves and a window seat with corduroy cushions, an open fireplace and a Morris chair, and a student's lamp! He was rich! He could tell them all "to go chase themselves!" He was rich! He had twenty-two thousand dollars!

He dressed hastily, his heart singing. But, with all

his elation, there lurked within him a fear that ever grew more persistent, that somehow he had forfeited the money, that he had allowed it to slip through his fingers. When he had shaved and put on his best suit, a white cheviot shirt and a black silk cravat, he examined himself critically in his mirror. His appearance producing in a measure the effect he desired, he ran down stairs and at Childs restaurant swallowed his coffee and butter-cakes as fast as the excessive heat of both permitted. As he boarded an up-town Broadway car, he noted that all his cash in hand amounted to one dollar and ten cents.

At the *Breslin*, he interviewed the assistant manager and learned that the firm's name of his father's attorneys was Harris, Mooney and Merillon, and their address was 35 Nassau Street. He arrived at their office a little after eleven.

The result of his visit was not altogether satisfactory. Mr. Merillon was very cordial, but he smiled at Carey's assumption that the legacy was to be handed over at once.

"Due notice of your father's death, Mr. Williams, must be given the publicity required by law, to allow any unknown creditors your father may have to file their claims against his estate. We were a little at a loss to understand why we failed to receive a reply to the communication we addressed you in your home town, and only yesterday we received a reply from our representative there, who advised us that he had called upon your mother, who informed him that you had decided to refuse it. As there were no restrictions made by your father regarding . . ."

"I've changed my mind," Carey said, feeling the colour rising in his face.

"I'm glad of that," Mr. Merillon continued, "but you must understand that at least ten months or a year must

elapse before your father's estate can be apportioned as he desired. We, as his executors, could not possibly disburse any part of his property prior to that. However, as your father was not engaged in active business, and we have been conversant with his affairs for some years, it may be that my partners will decide to help you out of your present difficulties. Your father's personal effects may be turned over to you at once. His widow, after consultation with us, arranged to have these crated. I am not certain whether they have been removed as yet to the storage warehouse where it was decided to send them until we heard from you regarding their disposition. If you will call on Saturday, I will be able to tell you about them and advise you of our decision as to advancing you sufficient funds to tide you over for the present."

The intervening days were full of excitement for Carey. On Saturday, "Babe" Brown would expect his board. His fate,—of such little importance to any one in that vast, seething city—rested with his father's attorneys. He did not worry about it, however. He was too excited to do any work, so he spent his time looking at vacant studios. He found this a fascinating amusement. Not knowing what his income was to be, he had no idea of what he could afford. The rents appalled him, particularly as he soon realised that he would be put to the expense of furnishing. He alternated his inspection of studios with visits to the antique furniture shops on Fourth Avenue and the second-hand furniture dealers on Third. He planned a hundred different schemes of furnishing a hundred different studios.

He met McNeil and French in one of these Third Avenue stores, haggling with the dealer over the price of a large walnut dresser. Not being certain of their recep-

tion of him, Carey sauntered out into the street, hoping to give the impression that he had not observed them; but French came running after him. They were both glad to see him; when had he returned? Where was he living? They were going housekeeping in a flat—just the two of them. The Fillmore house was going downhill. Vernaught and Washburn had moved away and Mamma Muggins and Miss Watt in their heavy black put an "awful crusher on any sort of a joke." It was dismal. They had had to get in an upstairs girl to do Anna's work and were obliged to help themselves! Anna, whom they had treated like a drudge while she was alive, they had begun to appreciate now they had to pay some one to come in to do her work! There had been no word from Jerry Hart. McNeil wasn't sure he had heard a thing about the whole affair.

The meeting cheered Carey. They had spoken of an evening at Hammerstein's with them, and Carey would have enjoyed it; but his purse now contained only twenty cents, and he was obliged to tell them that, for a while, he was broke. He made up his mind to give them a "bang-up" party when he came into his money.

On Saturday he saw Mr. Merillon. The semi-annual interest from the twenty-two bonds fell due on January 1st, and the coupons were still to be cashed. If this sum would help Carey for the time being, the executors, so Mr. Merillon explained, would be very glad to deposit the amount to his credit at whatever bank he chose.

"And that would amount to—?" asked Carey.

"Five hundred and fifty dollars."

He had hoped it was going to be considerably more than that. However, it was a God-send just at the present. He left with the cheque in his pocket.

Among the various vacant studios he had visited, he

had found one in a large rambling building on Seventh Avenue, devoted entirely to artists' quarters. It was called The Rembrandt Studios. It contained nearly a hundred small apartments that rented at thirty-five to forty-five dollars a month; each was equipped with a bath and kitchenette. They were designed for light housekeeping, and Carey saw himself cooking his own breakfasts and lunches over the diminutive gas stove, and eating his dinners at some cheap restaurant. The chief attraction about the place was the size of the studio itself, which was about twenty by thirty feet. There was a large skylight, like an immense dormer window, and, although there was no fireplace, there were two steam radiators, and plenty of hot water.

The deciding factor in persuading Carey to select these quarters was that his neighbours would be artists like himself. Some of the names on the letter boxes downstairs he recognised as those of successful illustrators, whose work was constantly appearing in the weeklies and some of the monthlies. Particularly was he familiar with the illustrations of Fleming Springer, and the Neidlingers, both of whom drew, the wash drawings of Arthur William Brooks, and the comic pen-and-inks of Mark Harrison. Besides artists, a number of musicians found quarters in the Rembrandt Studios. Carey had heard them at their vocalising and their scales on his first visit. The atmosphere of the place appealed to him. He would be in his own element, among those with whom he belonged. He told himself he was slowly mounting the rungs toward success, and the Rembrandt Studios constituted a phase in his progress to an apartment of his own, and thence to an establishment like Gregory Shilling's. It would all come, perhaps slowly, but, nevertheless, it would come!

Carey moved on the following Saturday. He found great pleasure in buying sheets and blankets and towels and pots and saucepans, and in laying in a small supply of coffee and condensed milk, canned beans and soups. He bought a couch at Macy's, and a small table, a chest of drawers and a couple of chairs at the second-hand furniture dealer's on Third Avenue. For some time he hesitated over an eighteen-dollar rag rug he saw at Wanamaker's, but finally succumbed to its warm tones and bought it. Curtains presented a difficult problem. Beside the skylight, the studio possessed two windows that faced upon a narrow air-well. With the shades drawn, the room was close and stuffy; raised, they exposed the ugly brick wall of the well. At Wanamaker's he found a soft, golden brown texture that the clerk had described as "aurora cloth." A week after he moved in, he sent an order to the department store to have the windows measured and the curtains made.

Gradually he became settled in his new quarters, but, after the interest of moving in and furnishing the studio had passed, a feeling of loneliness and isolation descended upon him. He longed for companionship. He missed Joe Downer and Jerry Hart; he would have felt grateful for an evening with French and McNeil. They, however, had moved away from the Fillmore's and had begun their experience of keeping house. He had lost their new address. He began to realise how few persons in New York he knew, and of these not one could he count on as a real friend.

Behind the closed doors of the studios in The Rembrandt came the noise of young laughter and high spirits; odours of appetizing dishes, entrancing smells of cooking food, filtered through the halls at meal time; a girl in a painter's smock would fling open a door as he, perhaps,

was passing by and, springing lightly across the intervening hall, bang loudly and peremptorily upon that of a neighbour's, to borrow a tube of paint, or an onion, or a cup of kerosene for the lamp. But no one invited him to partake of the fragrant suppers, or spoke to him as he wandered in and out of the building. He felt "out of it," lonely and despondent.

In such a mood of depression it occurred to him that his father's personal effects, his books and music, had, in addition to the bonds, been bequeathed to him, and that, though he might not be particularly anxious to become their owner, it was unquestionably his duty to claim them. He therefore telephoned Merillon, one morning toward the end of February. Merillon advised him to apply to the manager of the *Hotel Breslin* who, he understood, had had the clothing, effects, books and music belonging to Mr. Virgil Williams put in storage awaiting directions regarding them from the attorneys of the deceased man. Carey was sent by the hotel manager to the undertakers who furnished him with an order on the warehouse company.

Several days passed before the crates containing his father's few personal belongings finally arrived at The Rembrandt Studios. There were seven of them and, after he had tipped the expressmen who had carried them up from the street to his own studio, he stared rather blankly at the great square boxes, almost as tall as himself, that sat squat and uncompromising in the middle of his little home.

Carey had no idea what constituted the personal effects of a man such as his father had been, until he came to investigate the contents of these boxes. As he unfolded the coats and vests and trousers, and piled the stiff-bosomed shirts and underclothes, there came to him

a depressing sense of having failed the man who had left him these things. The woman whom he had made his second wife, the dying man foresaw, would take her share of his money and leave his body to the undertakers, concerning herself only with her own welfare. Virgil Williams undoubtedly hoped that, in return for the unexpectedly generous amount he had left his son, the boy would attend to the disposition of his clothing and intimate belongings, sensing his father's aversion to having these handled by servants and the hirelings of undertakers. Carey understood all this now; it was as palpable to him as though his father had written him a last letter of his wishes.

As Carey unpacked the clothing, there emanated from it a faint aroma that brought back the man who had worn it as vividly as if the days when Carey was still a school boy and his father painfully and slowly climbed the stairs, blind with a sick headache, were but a week or so ago. The sweat stains under the armpits on the lining of a vest supplied the last intimate touch that enabled Carey to recall his vigorous character and personality. It stirred within him a welcome affection for the man whose son he was. His father might have done wrong, might have treated his mother shabbily, ignored and neglected himself for years, and yet, upon his deathbed, he had thought of Carey and left all these things to him, not to treasure and preserve—he understood his father's purpose well enough for that—but to dispose of as seemed advisable,—as his own son chose. There was something extremely appealing to Carey about this simple trust. His father was dead two months, and his son did not even know where he had been buried!

Three of the cases contained books. They had been well selected, and some of them very beautifully bound.

The greater portion dealt with art or music, while there were a number of histories and almost a complete collection of the works of the English poets. There were some thirty volumes of Baedeker. A fourth case was filled with music. In this were scores of nearly all the operas and a great quantity of European editions of the compositions of Bach, Beethoven, Clementi, Scarlatti, Brahms, Schumann and Chopin, each portfolio carefully tied with a linen ribbon to keep the loose pages together. Only an ardent music lover would have taken such pains.

For sixteen dollars, Carey had some low book shelves built along one side of the studio, and he spent two days painting and varnishing them. The books and music gave the studio an atmosphere of completeness and cosiness. He was delighted with the effect. He determined to have some loose curtains of monk's cloth made for the book cases as soon as he came into his money. The joy he derived from the companionable backs of the rows of books grew from day to day. He tried to read some of the ones dealing with art, but they failed to interest him. They dealt with Greek and Roman achievements, heavy volumes containing intaglio reproductions of the Parthenon, the Arch of Titus, the Forum at Pompeii, the pictures protected by fine tissue paper, the legends printed thereon in red italics. Other books dealt with the work of the Pre-Raphaelites, and there were portfolios containing large engravings of the details from the mural paintings in the Vatican,—the Sistine Chapel and the room of the Borgias. There were also collections of reproductions of the masterpieces in The Louvre, the great paintings in the Luxemburg Galleries, notable pictures of the French Salon, Women in French Art,—the latter in magazine form to which Virgil Williams had evidently subscribed for years. Every other picture in

these books seemed to Carey to be by Bouguereau, whose fat, round-eyed, sheep-faced women irritated him curiously.

He wondered a little that these reproductions of great masterpieces left him so cold. It was as if Art was not his profession and that he pursued another calling. Had he stumbled across one picture by Walter Madison Parke he would have been thrilled to the core of his being. They were *illustrators*: Parke, the master; Carey Williams, the humble student. It occurred to him for the first time that the work of the illustrator is an art by itself. He thought about this a great deal and the more he considered it, the more he was convinced it was so.

His father's clothing he separated into two bundles. One of these he sent to the Salvation Army, the other he took to a neighbouring tailor who assured him it would be a simple matter to alter them to fit himself: three business suits, a frock coat, and some white vests. Carey felt sure that his father would have been glad to have him wear them.

From the undertaker, he learned that his father was buried in Mount Kisco Cemetery, and on Sunday he made his pilgrimage to the grave. There had been a heavy snow and it was biting cold. Drifts had piled themselves against the frozen monuments, obliterating the smaller ones, covering the ground in a series of undulating dunes with a smothering whiteness. A high, rioting wind swept out of the north, and the fine dry particles of snow swirled about among the half-covered marbles and mausoleums, leaping across the wide, circling roads, spinning up toward the low, dull-grey clouds, like flying, tossing manes of galloping white horses. Carey bent his head against it and stumbled on through the en-

cumbering drifts, pulling one foot after another out of the ankle-deep piles that had gathered in the roadway.

There had been no satisfaction in standing before a few square yards of whiteness, and in realising that beneath it and some additional feet of hard, frozen earth, his father's body lay, an organism that had suffered so much pain, that had known bitterness and disappointment, disillusion and unrealised hopes. What was it all for? A man lived, begot and died. No one mourned him. This one's first wife hated him; his second, having secured the bulk of his money, despised him! His son?

Carey felt acutely sorry for him. He guessed the tragedy of his father's life, the dreadful emptiness of it. It was like the wind-swept, snow-covered cemetery: only dead things remained; even the memories of joys and emotions that once had thrilled and swayed the living body had been slowly wiped away, obliterated as the snow effaced the outlines of the monuments that had been so carefully chiselled and fashioned, and had been so lovingly placed there.

The boy turned away, the wind howling at his back, pushing him eagerly along, hurrying him down the winding road, as though it resented his living presence within the city of the dead.

When the bonds were turned over to him, Carey resolved that one of them should go to erect a simple stone beside his father's grave. No one should know about it but himself; he would not even tell Joe.

CHAPTER II

A FINAL extravagance in the shape of a beautifully-shaped bronze lamp with a maroon and green shade brought Carey to the abrupt realisation that, in two months, he had spent all but about a hundred dollars of the sum his father's attorneys had allowed him. The lamp he had found in a curious and dirty junk shop on Houston Street. The dealer had wanted forty dollars for it, and the fact that Carey had beaten him down to twenty-five and, further, that he knew that the lamp was worth at least twice what the dealer asked originally, seemed to furnish irrefutable arguments in favour of his becoming its immediate owner.

But, after he had cleaned it and filled it with oil and adjusted its wicks and admired the soft, gracious radiance that filtered through the maroon and green shade, he was obliged to consider once more the problem of existence.

Since he had returned to New York, he had not touched his work. Week after week had slipped away while he hoped that some morning's mail would bring him a commission from Sherman. He had written the Art Editor informing him of his new address and expressing the hope that a story would present itself shortly with which he might be trusted; but he had had no reply. The necessity of following this up or of peddling his work again among the magazines and advertising agen-

cies did not seem as imperative as it had done in view of the pile of fifty- and twenty-dollar bills that had lain at the bottom of his handkerchief drawer. The longer he idled, the more impossible did it seem for him to buckle down to his work again. All the fire of his enthusiasm was gone. He spent much of his time at the theatres, occupying gallery seats, buying his ticket two and three weeks in advance to be sure of a front seat. After the final curtain fell and he hurried with the rest of the audience to the street, it was always a dismal moment when the others rapidly disappeared, hastening to their homes or to noisy, merry suppers, leaving him sauntering along the sidewalk with perhaps no more definite aim than to go back to his cheerless room in The Rembrandt Studios, open a bottle of beer and drink it by himself.

Among his extravagances during the first month of his tenancy in The Rembrandt Studios had been a water colour box. It was unusually complete, with some forty different colours, and contained various fascinating porcelain saucers that seemed to invite the mixing of the little brick pigments. Carey had not tried his hand at water colours since the sketching tour during which he had made the friendship of Joe Downer. He had always wanted to experiment with them, however, and now, dully and listlessly, he turned to his new box, hoping that, through what amusement the working in this unfamiliar medium might afford, he would find an idea or an inspiration that would help him get back to serious work.

For some time he sat before his drawing table, pencil in hand, gazing stupidly at the neatly thumb-tacked sheet of Watman's paper upon it, vaguely attempting to think of a suitable subject to lay in which he could work up later in water colours. He was trying to recall a bit of landscape he had once done for Professor Eschen,

with which the old man had been greatly pleased, when a knock came at the door. Since his arrival at The Rembrandt Studios, Carey had constantly received calls from men, women and children seeking model hire. The men were usually white-haired, with ample flowing beards; the women, either elderly or flirtatious; the children, red-cheeked, in Fauntleroy suits, accompanied by their mothers who resented any admiration for their offsprings less ardent than their own. But the girl who answered Carey's shout of "Come in" was a different type from any of these. He saw the frightened look that swept the room, including everything in it but himself, and the shaking hand that caught the ends of the piece of fur she wore at the throat. She stood on the threshold, half leaning against the door jamb, her other hand still upon the knob. Carey stared at her, fascinated by the picture she unconsciously made. Suddenly the girl's roving eyes rested upon him. Swiftly, with simultaneous gesture of hand and foot, she stepped back into the hall, shutting the door firmly after her. Carey, for an instant, continued his stare at the blank surface of the door. Then he sprang up, leaped across the room, flung it open, in time to see her slim figure hurrying down the hall.

"Wait a minute!" he called. She stopped, half turning toward him; shrinking perceptibly closer to the wall as he came up to her.

"If you want a job as model, I'm looking for one." Not till then was he aware of the appealing beauty of her face. It was not the composed, sedate beauty of little Jane Boardman. This girl was an Irish type, a thin oval face and grey eyes, with heavy, dark-bronze brows and lashes. Her hair, the most noticeable characteristic she possessed, was a dull red. Carey, as he stood before her, was conscious only of an urgent desire to convince this

girl that he did not belong to the class of men she instinctively feared.

Swiftly she flashed him a look, and he smiled at her boyishly and frankly.

"You don't know much about this business," he said ingratiatingly. "You need not be afraid of me. You're just the type of a model I want."

Without raising her eyes again, the girl walked toward the open door of his studio. Carey followed; but, as he shut the door behind him, some of her embarrassment and constraint communicated itself to him. When she had removed her hat and slipped out of the long, loose coat she wore, Carey found, in the quaint, awkward movements of her hips and shoulders, convincing evidence of the unsophistication and naïveté he had noticed in her face. Her hair was remarkable. It was lustreless, possessing a frosted quality, like the mark of a person's breath upon a window glass:—a dull brick red. She wore it in two heavy braids, wound about her head like a double halo. Her dress was blue serge, obviously of the department store's basement type, but relieved by white linen cuffs and turned-down collar. Her gestures, as she raised her arms for a moment to pat the heavy red ropes that lay coiled upon her head, were charming in their curious angularity and sexless grace.

It was evident to Carey she did not know what was expected of her. He was unaware, however, of the extent of her agitation until, raising his head from the process of putting a delicate point on his pencil, he observed again the violent trembling of her hand. His anxiety to relieve her of her distress made him almost as nervous as she was.

"Darn it! She's only a model after all!" said Carey

to himself, fussing over his brushes. And, suddenly turning to face her, he spoke almost roughly:

"Look here, Miss—er—, Miss—er— please get wise. I'm not going to embarrass you. I'm not that kind. You came here on business and, at the end of your work, I'll pay you a dollar and a half for each hour you've been posing. Now, all I want of you is to do a study of your head. If I don't finish it to-day, I'll ask you to come to-morrow. If you are going to act like a frightened rabbit, you can go find some other artist who won't be troubled by your nervousness. . . . Now, please sit there and look over at that lamp. Turn your head a little more to the right—a little more still,—now, raise your chin. There, that's excellent. Please tell me when you are tired."

Rapidly he sketched in the head, following the style he had used in the drawing of Jerry Hart, Sherman had praised. It came easily and brilliantly. When it was half blocked in, he felt that, as usual, it possessed a certain quality that his finished work always lacked. So far, it might easily have passed for the preliminary sketch made by a far more able artist. As he worked, there arose within him that desire for creation that had been totally lacking for so many weeks. The girl's hair fascinated him; he was eager to match the tone of lustreless red, to catch the Irish charm of the grey eyes with the thick, long, bronze lashes. His lack of experience with water colour did not occur to him as he laid aside his pencil and turned to his new, clean tin box.

He progressed with surprising rapidity, and a certain exhilarating sense of elation began to possess him. He felt he had been successful in catching the girl's expression, which was both winsome and appealing. But, when he commenced to work up the drawing, he became aware

of his limitations, his unfamiliarity with his medium. It required infinite pains in adding one tone to another after the first one had dried. Try as he would, the freedom the sketch had displayed began slowly to escape him and his work to tighten up. In despair, he tilted back in his chair and gazed discouragedly at the half-completed drawing. He decided he was in too excited a condition, and it would be better to ask the girl to come back on the following day and finish the head then. He could not resist the temptation, however, of trying his hand at the dull glory of her hair at once.

After she had rested, he began to experiment with his colours, mixing various shades of red with Chinese white to destroy any brilliancy the paint might possess. The exact shade evaded him. The colour in the mixing bowl repeatedly seemed satisfactory, only to dry to a lighter or a darker tone upon the paper. The edges of the drawing sheet in front of him were covered by his various tests. Upon the floor, within reach, lay the wrappings in which the new lamp had arrived that morning. A piece of stiff brown strawboard protruded from the debris, and Carey, searching for something upon which to try a new colour combination, drew it toward him.

The strawboard instantly absorbed the moisture and left the colour an even, flat tone of perfect smoothness, the exact gradation in shade he wanted.

But Carey could not get the same effect upon the Watman paper. It took him some time to convince himself of this. Also he discovered that it was practically impossible to maintain the same quality of a certain shade upon the water colour paper, whereas, on the strawboard, it proved a simple matter. In disgust he closed his paint box, determined to let the matter wait over a day.

While he had been working over the red colour combi-

nations, he had told the girl to abandon the pose and to rest until he wanted her again. Now he turned to find her crouching by the book case, a volume belonging to his father open upon her knee. She was absorbed in her reading, and Carey watched her, amused and silent, while she turned one page after another. Gradually the intentness of his gaze burnt itself into her consciousness. She turned with a frightened gesture, the book falling to the floor, the blood sweeping her face.

"That's all right. Don't look so scared," Carey said reassuringly. "I was studying the composition you made as you knelt there. It was interesting. I should like to try my hand at it some time. I'm all through for to-day. You can come to-morrow? At ten? That's excellent. Here are your three dollars. I hope you don't find the work too fatiguing."

Not until she was gone did he realise that she had not once spoken. She had not even left him her name and address. Had he been less interested in his work, he might have been more curious about her. As it was, beyond thinking that she was rather a funny girl, too self-conscious ever to make a successful model, he dismissed her from his mind and turned eagerly to the strawboard.

It was of rather peculiar texture, heavy in weave, but free from the fibrous fuzz that usually covers the surface of strawboards. It was lighter in colour also, having a pale, brownish-grey shade, like the mats used by picture framers for photographs. It was as absorbent as a blotter, and he found that even the thinnest colour, when mixed with Chinese white, registered satisfactorily. It needed the Chinese white, however, for without it the colour was absorbed with the water. He began to experiment with flat tones, and the more he worked the more excited he became. The effect was astonishing. The

colour could be laid on as evenly as though it was pasted there like a strip of paper. The result was eminently satisfactory; it lent itself to the most brilliant poster treatments.

Among his father's books, that from which he derived the greatest pleasure was a volume containing innumerable miniature reproductions of the covers and coloured inserts of the German periodical, *Jugend*. It represented the work of the modern German artists, and Carey was fascinated by the originality and boldness of their style. He got out this book now, and began to copy some of the designs that appealed to him. He had to supply his own colour schemes, but this he found, with the help of the absorbent quality of the strawboard and his own idea of mixing his colours with Chinese white, to be the most interesting part of the work. What gave him the greatest satisfaction was that this new way of working, the flat tones and the poster treatment, hid his great weakness, the tightness of his drawing. When the last ray of afternoon light was gone, he found he had used up all the strawboard, even some of the broken bits no bigger than his hand. He was very tired, but very happy. It did not matter to him that his elation arose from the discovery of a trick. He did not know just what he had accomplished. Something told him he had made a discovery that would please the Art Editors; but he wasn't sure about it.

In the middle of the night he awoke and lay for some time gazing up into the darkness, fearing to get up and look at his new work lest he should find he had been mistaken in it. The sudden doubt as to whether or not it would reproduce filled him with such apprehension that he forgot his mistrust and, springing up, switched on the light. For a long time he studied the hastily made

sketches of the previous afternoon, and finally went back to bed satisfied and happy. He was not certain about the reproductive quality of his new style; but, with his work itself, he was more than pleased. The dull, lustreless, flat tones against the brownish-grey of the strawboard were vividly effective. If his work could not be reproduced, he was certain he could sell it to the art dealers.

In the morning, he visited the junk shop where he had bought the lamp and, after much difficulty, persuaded the suspicious old Jewish proprietor to tell him the name of the paper house where he bought his wrapping paper and strawboard. There he purchased two bundles of the material, paying a dollar and a quarter for each bundle of a hundred sheets. He was back at his studio before ten.

Promptly on the stroke of the hour, the girl arrived. Although still shy and irritatingly timid, she had not the same distrust of him. Silently she assumed the pose, and silently Carey plunged into his work. In less than an hour the drawing was completed, and Carey began another, finishing it by noon. He dared not allow himself to speculate on how well he had succeeded. He only realised he was radiantly happy, that the world was young and gracious, and that his red-headed model was the most beautiful girl in the world. He tried to get her interested in himself. As he worked, he talked to her, telling her of his life at home, of his mother, of Joe, of how he used to long to come to New York, and how at last he had realised his wish and was now trying to get a foothold in that teeming city. Only when he came to speak of his father did he meet with any response from her.

"They—belonged to your father?" It was the first words she had spoken, and her voice had a quaint Irish

burr that Carey thought enchanting. She indicated the books as she spoke, and Carey nodded.

"The music is wonderful. I looked at some of it yesterday. You have *all* the Wagner scores." Her voice was warm and husky, but it betrayed the admiration she could not otherwise express.

"You are fond of music?" Carey asked.

Her swift glance was answer enough.

"Well, why don't you take some of it home with you?" he suggested. "I don't play, and I shouldn't understand it if I did."

The girl shook her head firmly, compressing her lips. But she did not speak. Carey decided that she dared not accept from him a loan of what to her seemed so infinitely desirable. Presently he asked her her name. There was a quick change of colour in her face before she answered.

"Cecilia Shaughnessy."

She gave him her address and telephone number; but, when he asked her about what previous experience she had had as a model, she shook her head again. She was like a child during its first day at school. Her shyness rose up as a barrier between them at the first personal word about herself. Carey was filled, however, with the desire to share his exuberance of spirits. He would have enjoyed making love to her for the satisfaction of giving vent to the emotional ecstasy that possessed him. He knew, however, that one wrong word would make an end of her visits.

Sherman had not come in from lunch when Carey asked for him at the offices of the Consolidated Press Syndicate early in the afternoon. He had carefully wrapped the two drawings separately, determined to

show one to Sherman and the other to Ben Mercy. He would thus obtain the opinion of two experts, and, if neither agreed with him as to the unusual quality of his new work, he would know the worst at once. He was still under the influence of the morning's excitement, and the time appeared unending before Sherman swung open the glass door to the outer office and, catching sight of Carey, said, with his Scotch twinkle brightening his eye:

"Hello, Mr. Indefatigable! You here again?"

"I've got something . . .," began Carey; but Sherman cut him off in his brusque manner and jerked his head toward the inner office.

Following the Art Editor, Carey met little Jane Boardman in the passage way. They gripped hands warmly, a smile of frank pleasure on both faces. It was only a half-minute's encounter, just long enough for the girl to say:

"I thought you were coming to see me," and for Carey to answer: "I certainly intend to. I'll come next week."

In the Editor's office, his hand trembled so, as he picked at a troublesome knot in the string about the drawing, that he was obliged to use the shears on Sherman's desk.

"I remember I promised you a yarn, Mr. Williams," the Art Editor was saying. "There hasn't been one that's come in yet that you would *want* to tackle. The last two were both about babies, and I know you'd prefer a fair chance in the first story I send you."

Carey crushed the wrapping paper he had stripped from the drawing between his hands, tilted the piece of strawboard forward to get the proper angle of light, and stepped back to give Sherman a clear view.

The Art Editor looked at the drawing a moment, squinted his eyes at it, picked it up, ran his thumb over the surface of the board, turned it over to examine the

other side, shot Carey a quizzical look, and set it down again. For some moments he sat looking at it, his face hard and sharp, his eyes screwed up into a half pucker, half squint. Then he said:

"This is mighty effective, Williams. You've drawn a beautiful face. I like your flat treatment. That's very odd—that's very distinguished. That hair—that's great! How the devil . . . But I won't ask. It's your secret . . . I want to show this to our circulation man. Wait a moment."

Carey waited a long time. He was aglow with Sherman's praise; but it was so long before the Art Editor returned that he began to wonder whether he had not assumed too much. But Sherman's face was full of his merry twinkle when he came back.

"For once," he said, "our circulation manager and I agree. We'll be glad to accept this for a cover, Mr. Williams, and we want some more like it."

Without replying, Carey snapped the string that bound the other head intended for Ben Mercy, and slid it out of its paper covering.

Sherman laughed.

"You take a fellow up mighty quick, sir! . . . But I like this one better than the first." He bent closer to the drawing. "By George, that colour is as even as if it had been poured out of a pitcher! You've got a great stunt there, Williams! . . . Let me show 'em this one. I hope they'll like it as much as I do!"

This time he returned almost at once. He nodded his head at Carey, the smile hidden by his sandy beard shining out through the twinkle in his eyes.

"We want 'em both, Williams. Our circulation man is enthusiastic about them. He thinks they have great news stand value. I shouldn't be surprised if he is right.

As a rule, we like to get our covers for fifty dollars apiece, but we're so pleased with these that we are going to raise that to seventy-five. Make some more like 'em. A series would be a good advertisement for both of us."

Carey was broadly grinning.

"I knew they were good,—at least I thought they were; but I was afraid you'd say that the texture of the board I used would make them difficult to reproduce."

Sherman squinted his eyes again at the two pictures and shook his head.

"It may even look better in the reproduction than it does in the original."

Life took on a new interest for Carey. On the following morning when Cecilia arrived, he commenced a more elaborate composition than he had as yet attempted. It was elaborate in that it included more of her figure, but it was laid out on the same simple lines as the first two he had drawn. As he worked, a multitude of ideas for different colour schemes and different arrangements of her head and hair occurred to him. He foresaw that he could paint her in an infinite variety of costumes, smiling or sad, coquettish or serious, as he chose. There would be no end to the various combinations.

It was several days later that Cecilia reached Carey's studio at the accustomed hour in a manifestly agitated state of mind. Twice during the sitting she was obliged to wipe her brimming eyes, and to ask, in a low, husky voice, to be excused for it. Carey had an intuitive understanding of women. His attitude toward them was always deferential and courteous. Something withheld him from prying into Cecilia's life and history, which she obviously regarded as her own affair. On her first visit, he realised that his brusque manner had been hap-

pily the only one which could have persuaded her to enter his studio. He had tried to draw her out by telling her about himself ; but to his confidences she made no response. She interested him because she was reserved, and because she clearly had had little or no former experience as a model ; but particularly she interested him because her manners and speech were innately refined. She was well bred ; moreover, she was beautiful. In his lonely life, her fresh young presence was a delight. He wanted a friendship to come of it.

So, on this occasion, he was careful not to make any reference to her agitation, and he felt she was grateful. But, after she had gone, he speculated about it a long time ; and when she failed to arrive at the appointed hour the day following, his impulse, when he realised she was not coming, was to telephone to her. On second thought, he decided it would be an excellent excuse to go to her house. He wanted to find out how she lived.

Her address was on West Ninety-second Street, near Columbus Avenue. The house was one of a row of old-fashioned brick fronts, that had been remodelled and turned into apartments. In answer to the pressure of the bell beneath the brass mail box in the entry, the front door clicked violently. He pushed it open and, after an unending climb of stairs, through dark halls, he found her at the top of the last flight waiting for him. She had come out into the hall to meet him, but, when she recognised Carey, she was much embarrassed. There were two entrances to the apartment. She had opened the one in the rear that gave access to the kitchen and, not expecting a social visit, she still wore a large checked apron that amply enveloped her. Through the open door, Carey caught sight of a gas stove and a steaming

covered pot. An odour of cooking vegetables hung in the air. Sunlight poured in through the back window.

She stood a moment, awkwardly regarding him, and then, as he began to speak, swiftly stepped back into the apartment, shutting the door in his face. Taken aback, his anger rising, he was about to descend the stairs, when the door at the front end of the hall opened and she reappeared, the apron removed.

"Please come in, Mr. Williams," she said. "I hope that didn't seem rude."

"I was afraid you were sick," he began; but she held up her hand.

"Not one word about the work," she said, her voice low and quick. "My aunt—" she indicated some one sitting within,—“doesn't know I pose.”

Puzzled, Carey followed her. The room in which he found himself was unusually large, and gay with chintz. There were chintz curtains and chintz-covered furniture, and the wall paper was bright with a twining rose design. A little, white-haired woman in black came forward and was introduced. They all sat down stiffly, and a constrained silence fell upon them. Carey, not knowing on what basis he could explain his presence, waited for Cecilia to begin. The girl was equal to the occasion, however. There was no hint of the embarrassment and shyness that had possessed her at the studio. For a few brief moments her grey eyes swept the room, fixed themselves for one searching instant on Carey, and then turned to her aunt.

"Mr. Williams is the son of Mr. Virgil Williams, Tante. You remember the man we met at Mrs. Swoop's reception." She lowered her voice. "You knew he—he died? Mr. Williams has—Mr. Williams came on to New York to arrange matters."

The old lady, who sat primly on the edge of the chintz-covered davenport, raised her eyebrows in polite sympathy.

Cecilia rambled on, Carey adding a confirming sentence now and then. Mr. Williams was an artist; Mr. Williams was a newcomer to New York,—he had not been here a year yet; Mr. Williams had inherited a splendid collection of piano music from his father. All she had learned from Carey about himself she retold her placid, white-haired aunt, who dutifully responded with an occasional "Oh" and "Ah." Carey, watching Cecilia, marvelled at her quick-witted assurance and ease, so different from the shy, unresponsive girl who came to pose for him.

Presently he rose and held the thin, frail fingers for a moment, making his *adieux*. Cecilia followed him out in the hall.

"Thank you very much," she said. "I can't tell you how grateful I am."

"When and where can I see you?"

She hesitated.

"Have I offended?" he demanded.

She glanced up to his face, a look of surprise in her eyes.

"No,—of course not. I will be walking in the Mall in the Park at four."

"Thank you." He pressed her hand and ran downstairs.

Cecilia Shaughnessy's story was commonplace enough. She told it to Carey while they walked in the Park later in the afternoon.

She was born in Altoona, Pennsylvania. Her father, a happy, irresponsible Irish musician, had died shortly

after his marriage to one of the daughters of a local manufacturer. His wife followed him four years later. Cecilia was left to her mother's older sister, who conceived a fierce affection for her little niece, and reared her with the most rigid surveillance. There had been a little money, just enough to keep them decently comfortable. Music was the one thing upon which they disagreed. The aunt, who was tone deaf, had no patience with Cecilia's passionate love for it and would not give one penny of their meagre income for even the rental of a piano. The girl craved music as a hungry man craves food. It was the nourishment of her soul. Since they had come to live in New York, Cecilia had never neglected an opportunity to go where free music might be heard. She went on Sundays to various churches and to the Park when the band played in the afternoon. She frequented the concerts at the department stores and those given by the manufacturers of player-pianos. In the evening, when she could get some one to accompany her, she went to the free musical lectures at the Museum of Natural History. But she was not satisfied. To her Carnegie Hall and the Metropolitan Opera House were palaces of enchantment, for there the Boston Symphony and the Philharmonic Society held their concerts, the greatest virtuosos played and the world's opera stars sang. To be able to enter either of these two buildings, with the fortunate others who came by carriage and automobile, who sprang up under one's feet, arriving from this direction and that, pouring into the doorways like a black stream of water being sucked into a funnel, would be to her the greatest happiness afforded human kind. Often she would walk up and down on the other side of the street, watching an audience gather and disappear

within the enchanted gates, the longing to be one of them tearing her heart until it became a torture.

* One day, in desperation, she determined to try to earn some money by posing. An artist she had known had once wanted to paint her. She did not know what else she could do. The thought that she might be asked to undress and pose for the nude filled her with terror. She presumed that that was expected of all models, and this would have been an impassable barrier to her. For days she wrestled with the idea. Twice she presented herself at artists' studios, only to turn away at the last moment, sick with fear. She told her aunt that she wanted to take a course in designing at the College of the City of New York; this would account for her absences from home. Then came the day she had gone to The Rembrandt Studios. Fearing that she might be prevented from entering the building, if it was apparent that she was soliciting model-hire, she avoided the elevator and climbed resolutely to the third floor and knocked on the first door. A woman opened it; but she was a fashion artist and did not use models. The fact that Cecilia might get work from an artist of her own sex had not occurred to her before. It gave her courage. The next studio contained an individual with long hair, who informed her curtly that he did not engage models; he was a musician. The third was occupied by two men, one of whom sat working over a drawing board, while the other, a dressing gown about him, lay propped up in bed reading. They invited her to come in. Reluctantly, an instinctive distrust of them filling her heart, she entered and closed the studio door behind her. For some moments they let her stand before them without addressing her, while they ran their eyes over her, like cattle judges appraising beef. This was Cecilia's impres-

sion of their attitude. Finally, the man at the drawing board said to her:

"Well, Bright-eyes, what's *your* name?"

It was the inflection he gave the words that sickened Cecilia. Wave after wave of hot shame swept up into her face. She was afraid she would faint there in their room. Blindly she groped for the door handle, flung the door open, and gained the refuge of the hall. She walked down the long corridor hurriedly, struggling to regain her composure. At the end of it she waited, her hands pressed to her burning face. She determined to make one more effort. She saw a neatly engraved calling card tacked upon a door. It implied gentility. She came close to read it. It was Carey's name.

On her last visit to The Rembrandt Studios, she had met one of the two men who had so frightened and shocked her. In the hall, as she passed him, he had turned to watch her and had called out after her; she didn't catch his words. It made her feel degraded. She was sick and giddy by the time she reached Carey's studio. The next morning the same man was watching for her. The studio he and his sick friend occupied commanded, when its door was open, a view of the brass elevator cage. The noise made by the car coming to a stop and the clang of the gate rolling back sufficed to apprise anyone who might be interested, that someone was getting out at the third floor; a hasty glance, even from the further end of the studio, could determine the identity of the arriving person.

Cecilia, as she stepped out of the elevator, saw him at the same time he caught sight of her. Swiftly, like a hunted animal, she turned and ran down the stairs, out into the street. She could not go back. She felt sure Carey would telephone, and then she would try to ex-

plain matters to him. She hated to give up the sittings. Carey had always been considerate and kind, and the money earned gave her the only feeling of independence she had ever known. It meant concerts and operas to her; she had been to hear the Kneisel Quartet on Saturday afternoon, and had gone to the Damrosch concert on Sunday. It was wonderful! It had been the only glimpse she had ever had into Paradise,—that she would *ever* have. It was all over. Her grey eyes became suddenly suffused; drops trembled on her lashes.

They had gone to the *Casino* for tea. It had been very cold and, as they had sauntered up and down the Mall, both had become chilled. Fortunately, the *Casino* was deserted, and it was warm and pleasant. From behind the glass partition they could see an occasional motor spin past, scattering a fountain of slush to either side of the road.

"My dear Miss Shaughnessy," Carey said, "don't talk of giving up your sittings because a dirty beast of a fellow insulted you in the hallway. I'll move my studio first. I've told you it looks as if I was going to catch on, and I've got you to thank for it. I couldn't let you go now; I need you very much; it would be impossible for me to get along without you. Now, to-morrow I'll be waiting at the Paulist Church at ten, and I'll go with you to my studio. No one will speak to you while you have an escort."

Cecilia made a quick reach for her handkerchief and caught the tears just in time.

"You're very kind, Mr. Williams. I suppose I'm foolish; but my life has been one constant repression. 'Don't do this, Celia' and 'Don't do that, Celia.' I've been scolded and reprimanded until it doesn't seem as if I could do a thing without meeting my aunt's displeasure.

You see, she was eighteen years older than my mother, and she's an old woman now. She thinks it her duty to find faults in me. I don't know why I tell you all these things. You seem easy to talk to. I didn't know how I was going to make you realise that I wasn't just a model. Even now I don't understand how I ever came to do it."

Carey did not answer; he felt very sorry for her. He made up his mind that he would be good to this girl and make her a friend. They were both young and lonely and needed companionship.

"You mentioned my father this morning," he said. "Did you and your aunt meet him? Tell me how he impressed you."

"I'm sorry about that. I hoped you'd understand. I said whatever came into my head. My aunt wouldn't remember whom she met at that particular affair, and I wanted to make her think we had properly been introduced. Please forgive me. I hate to deceive her so. I suppose you think I'm pretty wicked."

Carey reached across the table and took her hand.

"Miss Shaughnessy—*please*. Don't talk that way. Let's you and I be friends—real friends. I understand you better than you think. I've seen you in your quiet home; your gentle aunt, however exacting she may be, is obviously a lady, and there is no mistaking you. I need your friendship and you mine. Will you accept it?"

They smiled at one another and pledged themselves in tea, touching cups. Later they walked home through the leafless trees in the gathering twilight, the snow stretching over the buried grass on either side, broken here and there by irregularly-shaped brown patches where it had begun to melt. Neither of them said much, but each was conscious that a strong bond had been established between them.

CHAPTER III

AS Carey stepped out of the elevator on reaching his own floor, he saw the closed door of the studio which had been left open by its occupants that morning to watch for Cecilia's arrival. He had not identified it in his mind as she had described the incident, but now he recognised it as the one he knew was occupied by Fleming Springer. His name and that of W. Tilford were neatly lettered on a card and thumb-tacked to the door. Without considering what he was going to say, but conscious of a certain smouldering indignation, he pushed the electric bell and opened the door at the answering shout.

The room was about the same size as his own, but, owing to its disorder, seemed smaller. A litter of things lay upon the floor. A brass bed, askew with the angle of the wall, the covers thrown over its foot, added to the confusion. Under the glaring cluster of electric lights a man, with a heavy growth of unshaven beard, clad in a wadded silk wrapper, sat at a cluttered table, eating some smoking spaghetti and drinking tea. Beneath the dressing gown the legs of his pajamas protruded, exposing hairy shins and bare feet thrust into wicker sandals. The other occupant, a clear-eyed, clean-faced, black-haired fellow, wearing a pair of khaki trousers, daubed with paint and spotted with ink, stood in the doorway of the

bathroom drying his hands on a towel. They both looked up inquiringly as Carey entered.

"You'll excuse me," Carey said, taking the plunge at once, "but I want to ask you fellows a favour. My name's Williams, and I have a studio down the hall. There's a model who comes to sit a couple of hours for me every morning, and one of you chaps has scared her so she won't come any more. She's very shy and new at the game; in fact, she never did any posing before; but she happens to be just the type I'm looking for, and I want to ask you not to bother her."

The two men exchanged looks and both began to laugh. The one at the table turned to Carey:

"Has she wonderful red hair, and soft, grey eyes, and a perfect oval face, and a charming, shy, shrinking manner?"

"Oh, shut up, you lurid ass!" the other interrupted him. He came forward to Carey, wiping the last of the moisture from his hand and extended it toward him with such heartiness and good humour that it instantly robbed Carey of his feeling of resentment.

"My name's Springer, Mr. Williams, and I'm the offending party! You tell the young lady that I'm darned sorry I annoyed her, and I'll not bother her again. She came in here looking for work, and I made some facetious remark that frightened her; I've been trying to apologise to her ever since. I saw her a couple of times on her way to your rooms, and I confess frankly that I did rave a bit about her looks to Tilley. She certainly is a hummer; but, Lord, I wouldn't have frightened her for a million dollars."

They shook hands warmly. Carey was conscious of an instant liking for him. His frank, ingenuous manner swept constraint and reserve out of its way as readily

and unconcernedly as an old woman's broom cleans a dirty kitchen.

He had a strong, clean face of remarkable beauty without being offensively handsome. His hair was thick and intensely black,—the glossy blackness of jet; he wore it straight back off his forehead, plastered to his skull like a tight-fitting black cap. His eyebrows were unusually heavy, even and dark. His mouth was large and expressive, and when he smiled—which was often—he showed a double row of large, perfect teeth, white as chalk and glistening as wet porcelain. He had a trick of winking his eyes rapidly now and then, that was nervous rather than affected. His chin was square and, although he had just shaved, his beard, underneath his rather olive skin, showed blue black. It was his sunny expression rather than the regularity of his features that made his face so likable.

Tilford had returned to the experiment of trying to wind his spaghetti upon his fork and transfer it to his mouth without disaster. In his wadded dressing gown and bristling beard, he appeared anything but attractive. He was a little bald and unhealthily fat.

Possibly Springer guessed from Carey's glance between them that he was wondering at the incongruity of the two.

"Tilley's my cousin, and he thinks he ought to rag me about every girl I happen to admire. Tilley's a good sort," he continued as if the other were not present; "he's a bit fussy about what he eats, but he's a gentle animal. The dear creature has had a touch of pleurisy, and he's grouchy when he's sick. He's not a pleasant sight now, is he, Williams? But he ain't so bad when he's shaved and cleaned up!"

Carey laughed, but Tilford silently regarded his face-

tious room-mate above the rim of his tea cup. With calm contempt, ignoring him, he turned to Carey, as he set the cup down, and asked:

"What's your line, Mr. Williams? I presume you're finding fashions as profitable as the rest of 'em these days?"

"No, I'm not clever enough for that," Carey answered. He told them a little about himself, mentioning his recent success with Sherman.

"Sherman's a crank; he doesn't often get enthusiastic," rejoined Tilford. "He must have liked your stuff very much; I'd like a look at it myself some time, if you wouldn't mind."

"Tilley believes himself a *connoisseur*," Springer laughed. "You wouldn't think to look at him now that he was the Advertising Director of the Frank Peabody Company."

Carey thought for a moment that Springer was joking; but something in Tilford's face, a look of half amusement, half irritation, suddenly convinced him that he was not. Carey could not conceal his surprise. The Frank Peabody Company was one of the most enterprising and largest advertising agencies in the country, and that this slightly bald, fat, unshaven gentleman in wadded wrapper should be its Advertising Director was almost unbelievable.

"He looks as if he were in the presence of the Maharajah of Rajpootana!" exclaimed Springer. "Brace up, man," he said to Carey. "He's harmless; never been known to bite any one, unless attacked. Wait; I'll get something to steady your nerves." He disappeared into the kitchen, and Carey heard him plying the ice pick in the refrigerator.

"I caught a rotten cold in my back," Tilford said, re-

ferring to his illness. "I couldn't take a long breath without it catching me like a knife thrust. I had to pant like a dog. They've had me in bed for nearly three weeks. However, I'm quite all right again and will be able to get back to the office on Monday. God, I *hate* being sick!"

Carey said something about it being "certainly fierce" and that he was "mighty sorry." He rose to go, with a pleasant feeling that he had at last made two friends in that barrack of studios, when Springer returned, the stems of two wine glasses in one hand, while in the other he twirled and rattled a nickel-plated cocktail shaker.

Springer had mixed enough liquor to make four cocktails and, as Tilford declined to join them, Carey and he had two apiece. As they were drinking them, the door of the apartment was burst open, and a man thrust his head into the room with an abrupt exclamation. He was greeted with a loud welcome from both of Carey's new acquaintances.

"Hello, Mark!"

"Come in, you're just in time!"

The newcomer accepted the invitation, shutting the door with a backward thrust of his foot. He was tall and lantern-jawed, his eye was rather wild, but his face was unmistakably the face of a humorist. He was introduced, and Carey recognised in him the Mark Harrison whose distorted, absurdly amusing pen-and-inks often occupied a double page in the comic weeklies. He also had the reputation of being a brilliant cartoonist.

Springer disappeared into the kitchenette, and presently returned rattling the ice-filled shaker again. Harrison had come in to know where Springer was going to eat. He confessed he had only a can of sardines and the remains of a potato salad in his larder, and felt like going out to get a decently-cooked meal. They discussed

it while they drank their cocktails. Springer had refilled Carey's glass and, from a feeling of wanting them to like him, he had not demurred. An argument ensued, in which Springer, while in enthusiastic accord with Harrison's suggestion that they go out and get some decent "eats," objected to the French *rôtisserie* that Harrison advocated. He was in favour of *Martin's* or the *Hofbräu*. Harrison claimed he never got his money's worth at either of these places; they over-charged, and, unless you ordered liberally, they made you uncomfortable.

The two began to call each other grotesque names; Harrison's epithets were so absurd and outrageous that Carey was convulsed with mirth. The discussion became a contest in which each strove to originate the more ridiculous term of opprobrium with which to address the other. Even Tilford was amused. He made no noise when he laughed, shaking all over like some huge mound of jelly. Carey's mirth became an agony; the tears trickled from his eyes, while he struggled to catch his breath. At his importunities, they finally stopped, more because the fertility of their brains had become exhausted rather than to please him. The selection of the dining place, however, was still unsettled. Carey, on whom the cocktails had begun to have their effect, felt emboldened to propose *Mouquin's*. The suggestion appeared a most happy one to both. They welcomed it with enthusiasm and insisted that Carey should go along with them. Pleased, but feeling it would be better not to accept too readily, he made various excuses, but they would not listen to him. Springer's vehement insistence warmed Carey's heart. He had conceived a deep admiration for this successful, attractive, free-mannered youth, and Springer's evident liking for himself was flattering and delightful.

The evening was a long-remembered one. It marked the beginning of his friendship for Fleming Springer and a phase of his own life that was to last for many months. They dined hilariously at *Mouquin's*, and later drove about the tenderloin district crowded into a hansom cab. Carey had no idea that there existed so many places which, instead of a harsher name, might be called dance-halls. He had lived in New York the better part of a year, and with Jerry Hart had visited only the ones that were well known, like the *Haymarket* and *Mollie's*. But Fleming Springer knew them all, and in most was known himself by the stewards and waiters. Their attitude toward him was deferentially obsequious, and he accepted it genially, without affectation. Carey was puzzled at first. He could not understand wherein lay Springer's influence. During the early part of the evening, the three kept together, leaving each place after one of them had bought a round of drinks. There was a dearth of gaiety in these gaudy resorts at first, and Springer paid no attention to the few tired-looking girls who sat scattered about among the tables that hemmed in the dancing floor. Toward eleven o'clock a marked change began to make itself evident; the tables rapidly filled up and by twelve there was not a seat vacant. As soon as the crowd began to gather, the girls who created the atmosphere that made these places seem brilliant and fascinating, put in their appearance. Carey was astonished at their quiet, unassuming, though elegant manner of dressing, and their exquisite beauty. He expected the beauty of the women of the under-world to be coarse, marred and wasted,—their manner of dressing conspicuous and extreme. These late-comers might have been one's sisters with their trim, severe tailor-mades, their quiet, unostentatious airs, their refined good looks. The

attitude they assumed was one of disdain and disinterest-
edness. A man who sought their acquaintance, not prop-
erly introduced, found small favour with them. They
looked about for their own friends and other habitués
and failing to find them at one place, went elsewhere in
search of them.

All these creatures of exotic beauty knew Fleming
Springer. At once his influence in these cheap and taw-
dry pleasure haunts was explained. He was not a lavish
spender; he never bought wine, but to these unfortu-
nate women his charm was irresistible. It was his im-
personal and indifferent manner with them, Carey de-
cided, that made him so attractive. It was not his money
they wanted; he might have his choice among them if
he would; they wanted *him*, to be with him, to be seen
with him, to dance with him. He possessed some subtle
influence over them that drew them to him as moths to a
light. He was magnificently built: a deep chest and
powerful shoulders, a slim waist and narrow hips. On
the floor, dancing the curious Coney Island walk that
was then popular, he appeared exceedingly graceful and
handsome. The women at the tables watched him, some
of them boldly trying to catch his eye.

But Springer was either unconscious of their prefer-
ence for him, or carefully concealed his knowledge of it.
A certain girl, to whom he and Harrison referred as
Trixie, failed to visit her usual haunts that particular
evening and, as the night wore on, it became imperative
for them that they should find her. In a hansom they
drove from place to place, Carey becoming more and
more impressed with their familiar knowledge of these
dives and dance-halls. It failed to disgust him as when
first he had accompanied Jerry Hart. Under the influ-
ence of Springer's genial society, it was only gloriously

♦

reckless. He was conscious that he was splendidly young, and that it was delightful to be in Springer's company.

Failing to locate Trixie, they decided it was time to eat again, and drove to *Jack's*. Somehow, Springer's personality secured them a table in that crowded restaurant. Women glanced at him, and to a few he bowed, showing his white, glistening teeth in an expansive grin. Every one, so it seemed to Carey, was conscious of his charm and good looks. He needed but to wish people to like him, and they began to love him.

At *Jack's*, after they had finished their bacon and scrambled eggs, they lost Harrison. He had left their table to speak to some one, and failed to return. After looking for him a long time, it finally occurred to Carey to inquire of the hat boy if the tall man who had checked his hat with theirs had gone out. The boy was under the impression that he had. It remained only for Springer and Carey to go home. But neither of them wished to do so. Although they had been drinking heavily, they assured each other that they were not in the least intoxicated. They decided to get an open carriage and drive out to a place called "The Crow's Nest," which Springer characterised as a "nifty joint."

Toward four o'clock, they found their way back to The Rembrandt Studios. Both of them were very much under the influence of liquor; they were drunk by now, but, although they occasionally staggered, they still had some portion of their wits about them. At a certain stage of their intoxication, Carey and Springer had grown sentimental and had expressed their liking for one another, pledging eternal friendship. It had been a thrilling moment, and it was of that Carey thought when he woke the following morning, his head racking, his nerves shaken to pieces, his mouth dry and flannelly. It

seemed to him that it had been a wonderful night, and Springer's declaration of friendship the most wonderful thing that had happened in it.

The immediate result of his new friendship was Tilford's enthusiasm for his recent work. Springer told him about it, and one evening Tilford came in "to have a look at his stuff," as he expressed it. Carey had finished five studies of Cecilia. With each drawing, he made of her, he felt his hand became more practised. He was able to get more "postery" effects and to allow himself to take certain liberties that a little earlier he would not have dared attempt. He was developing a tendency to tone down his work rather than make it "contrasty" or brilliant. He began to try for the colour effects of the great French painter, Puvis de Chavannes. The pale, flat tones refined his work and strengthened its quality.

Tilford made no pretence of hiding his pleasure. The following day, Carey brought the five studies down to Tilford's office. Frank Peabody himself came in to meet the artist and to look at his work. He and Tilford began an unintelligible conversation with regard to its appeal to an individual whose name Carey gathered was Gernhardt. Tilford asserted that it was just what Gernhardt wanted, "something distinctive and original." Peabody was noncommittal, reflectively rubbing his chin. A few days later, Carey received an order for a series of twelve heads from The Frank Peabody Company. They agreed to pay him fifteen hundred dollars for the dozen drawings. They were to be used as poster advertisements for a new department store that was shortly to open in New York. In the meantime, Carey had sold three of the five he had already finished to Sherman and

the two remaining ones to Ben Mercy. He received but fifty dollars apiece for the last, as Mercy could only use them on the jackets of books. Heads were not appropriate for the cover of *Stapleton's*, but Mercy was full of praise for Carey's new work, and patted him approvingly on the back.

"You'll make a hit with this work, my boy. This is what the public likes. The magazines and advertisers will be running after you; they'll be like a pack of hungry wolves on your trail. But . . . but . . ." He hesitated, glancing at Carey as if appraising him. "Let me give you a piece of advice: Keep your head; don't let them make a fool of you; don't think because they come flocking after you, you have done something that will carry you along for the rest of your life. You've discovered a new twist to an old appeal. You haven't invented the appeal itself. They will quit you when they are tired of you as quickly as now they clamour for you. Make this trick of yours serve you as long as it will. Keep humble, see clearly, and work for something more permanent. Don't let your popularity turn your head. You have a great future before you if you're big enough to seize it and handle yourself rightly. I like you and I'd like to see you succeed."

Carey glowed in the warmth of Ben Mercy's approval. He had won success. The great city he had grown to love so dearly, with its sweating millions fighting their daily fight for food and the right to exist, had not crushed him. He recalled his first impression of New York from the forward end of the Christopher Street ferry boat. In retrospect he seemed so young, so unequipped then. He was a man now, a man who had made his mark!

Much he owed to Cecilia Shaughnessy. He was thinking of her as he made his way homeward. Without her

he never would have accomplished what he had. She was an ideal model, always punctual, never distracting him while she posed, taking her departure when her time was up, silently and unobtrusively. If he did not feel like working, she would understand his mood, and, under her gentle influence, the desire for fresh effort would gradually awake within him. But always there was an air of distress about her while she was at the studio; she was ill at ease, constrained and timid. It was not that she distrusted him, but rather that she felt her presence there with him unwarranted.

As he sat comfortably in the corner of the Broadway car he had taken, and gazed absently out into the street, he wondered what he could do to make her happy, make her feel more at home in the studio, make her perhaps begin to like him the way he had grown to like her. She was so dear! So companionable! He was always sorry for her when he thought about her.

As if in answer to his thoughts, a sign in a store window,—one among the many he passed unread and unnoticed,—suddenly registered upon his consciousness: "Pianos Rented—Five Dollars a Month!"

He gazed at it fascinated, twisting his head to a painful angle as the car swept past. Abruptly he struggled to his feet, signalled the conductor, and swung himself to the street before the car came to a standstill.

The expression on Cecilia's face when she came the following morning amply repaid him for his thought and the trifling expense. She threw him one of her quick, expressive glances and, stripping off her gloves, raised the ebony lid and seated herself on the revolving stool. For a moment she regarded the silent keys, her hands folded in her lap. Carey watched her, conscious of the deep emotion that possessed her. Then the unhesitating fin-

gers were raised to the keyboard and she began to play. Carey was astonished. He had expected the attempt of a novice, a girl who, though perhaps a passionate music lover, had no technique. Cecilia was an accomplished musician; she played easily and brilliantly, wringing the melodic harmonies from the instrument as only a person can who has herself and the piano under perfect control.

"My grandmother in Altoona had an old square Chickering," she said, in answer to Carey's surprised remark. "I learned to play when I was five years old. The mother of one of my little playmates taught me, and after that I used to practise. My grandmother liked the hymns, but Tante never showed any interest. Since we moved to New York, I have only had a chance now and then at a piano, and no one knows, Mr. Williams, how much I have longed at times for the touch of the ivory keys." She put her hand to her eyes and for a moment was silent. Then, in a lower tone, she said very slowly, her voice full of the huskiness that Carey always found so charming: "I have a great deal for which to thank you, Mr. Williams."

During the intermissions when she rested from the constrained position of the pose, and after the work of the day was over, Cecilia used to play. She revelled in the music of Carey's father. Carey had always been indifferent to music. He could grow enthusiastic over popular songs, but had never been educated to an appreciation of a better grade. In her attempts to make him understand it, Cecilia at first only partially succeeded. He was content to lie on the couch while she played, smoking cigarettes endlessly. A curious, sensuous delight would envelop him after a while. The music had a hypnotic effect. At such times he ceased to think. His

eyelids drooped, and he lay back among the cushions soothed, deliciously content.

It was during one of these moments that Springer came to see him. It was the first occasion that he had not been welcome. Carey would have stopped him at the door, but Springer, with the abrupt cessation of the music, opened it without waiting for the answer to his knock. Cecilia, when she recognised him, rose hastily to her feet, one hand at her breast, her head bowed, her eyelids lowered. The situation was awkward. Carey introduced them, but Cecilia only inclined her head slightly; she did not raise her eyes. Springer began to talk to Carey about the Spring Exhibition at the Academy, and Cecilia slipped into her hat and coat and, without addressing either of them, left the room. Springer regarded the closed door a moment without speaking.

"She's sore, isn't she?" he said.

"She's a shy thing! I dare say she regards you as the Mephistopheles of the situation," Carey answered.

"She's charming. You're a lucky chap, Carey!" Springer said, cheerfully significant.

Carey laughed nervously.

"You're way off, my boy," he replied. "There's nothing doing."

"Oh!"

The exclamation was little more than a sound in Springer's throat, and yet it expressed his utter disbelief, and implied—so Carey felt—a disappointment in Carey's valuation of their new friendship, which, presumably, was not of sufficient weight to permit such confidences. Carey wanted Springer to feel that he regarded him as his chum, the best friend he had ever had. Unconsciously, in his admiration for him, he had begun to

imitate Springer's manner, his appearance, his style of dress, and easy speech. That Springer should doubt his whole-hearted affection for him, should consider him miserly in his confidences, distrusting him, was intolerable to Carey. He longed to share Springer's secrets, and stood only too ready to tell him anything and everything about himself that Springer cared to know. He did not analyse his feelings in what he said next. He was conscious only of being hurt and desiring that Springer should not misunderstand him.

"I tell you, Springer,—I hate to talk about a girl. You've got to protect 'em often against themselves. You know I haven't had much experience with women; I'm a perfect tyro with 'em, compared to you. It took me some time to get wise to Cecilia. She's a nice girl all right,—but she's like the rest of 'em. I'm not the kind of a fellow that 'kisses and tells.' I've got no secrets from you, however. She's a wonder, and you're right, I *am* a lucky chap."

"My girl's gone to Palm Beach," Springer said reflectively. "A rich guy's footing the bills; he's Cunningham Bates of the United States Suit and Cloak Company; barrels of money—makes fifty thou a year. She came to me and asked me whether she should go. I told her to run along; I've got no money to spend on women. She writes me almost every day."

He pulled out of his inside breast pocket two or three bulky letters addressed to him in an angular, feminine handwriting.

"I'd like you to read 'em; she's a clever kid. Go ahead, read 'em," he insisted, as Carey hesitated. "She'll be coming back in a few weeks, and I want you to meet her. I wrote her all about you the other day."

Carey flushed with pleasure. It was very flattering to

know that Springer thought enough of him to write about him to his girl. He shook out the closely written sheets from an envelope and began to read.

It was a new experience for him. He felt he was prying into the sacred privacy of a woman's soul. His loyalty to Springer would not permit the thought that his friend was guilty of any breach of confidence in showing the letters. They were curious samples of the abuse of the English language. Illiterate and badly spelled, they yet possessed a certain quality that indicated their writer, whatever her educational disadvantages, had a feeling for beauty and poetry. No one could question the girl's sincerity. Every other word was one of endearment. She poured out her affection for Springer unreservedly. Her love for him shone from the pages she covered with her writing. One of her sentences Carey remembered for a long time:

"When the sun shines on you, my darling, it is my love that is warming you; when it rains, the drops upon your cheek are my caresses; and when it snows, the soft flakes upon your lips are my kisses."

Carey could not understand how a woman, who evidently loved so deeply, could live with another man, accept his money, and deceive him by a continued pretence of affection. He said as much to Springer. His friend laughed.

"What the devil is she to do? I can't afford to keep her, and I won't marry her!"

Carey was silent. It seemed all wrong. Springer talked on, telling him of his various experiences with women. It was, if true, an astonishing history. Springer told it all too readily to be doubted, and Carey had seen for himself his influence with women of the under-world. Such men as Jerry Hart and Springer were new to

Carey; if there were those like them in his home town, he had been too young to know them. Neither Jerry Hart nor Springer considered himself unusual. The men they knew were all more or less like themselves. Women were their life, their chief interest. It was men like Carey who were unusual; he was letting his opportunity slip; he was asleep to the pleasures that might be his. He was a molly-coddle. Women he met must hold him in contempt. He was too slow.

He thought of these things for several hours after Springer left him that afternoon. The letter he had read haunted him. It must be wonderful to be loved like that! Carey longed for such affection. He felt himself much more deserving of it than Springer, who obviously held it in light esteem, allowing some one else to share what might be his alone. Carey could not criticise Springer. He recognised him as a victim of his own charm. He was presumably selfish; he had been spoiled by every one all his life; why shouldn't he be selfish? No one, Carey felt, who was so spontaneous, so generous, so warm-hearted and affectionate could be capable of anything really blamable. Women fawned upon him; men lavished their favour upon him; he was only human. Carey was sure he understood Springer, even on such a short acquaintance, better than others who had known him for many years.

When Cecilia Shaughnessy arrived the next morning, there was a new light in Carey's eyes as he looked at her. She was in higher spirits than he had ever seen her. She had gone with a girl friend to the Boston Symphony the previous evening. They had played the Brahms second symphony and a suite by Bach in D major. She had never heard such music. It had carried her right to the gates of heaven. The marvellous har-

monies had been haunting her all night. It was such a pity Carey did not understand music; he lost so much pleasure in life.

She sat down at the piano and played from memory the beginning of the second movement of the Brahms symphony. Carey watched her face, radiant with the joy the music gave her. He decided she had one of the most perfect profiles he had ever seen. An exclamation burst from him. She whirled around on the stool, believing the music had at last reached him.

"Isn't it wonderful! Could anything be more divinely inspired?" She was glowing with enthusiasm.

"Yes—yes, it's great," Carey agreed. "It just struck me, as you sat there playing that way, what a stunning picture you'd make as your namesake, the saint,—Saint Cecilia! By George, I never thought of it!"

"Didn't you?" she said. "My mother named me that because she was so fond of music!"

"I suppose it was stupid of me not to have thought of it before. 'Cecilia' is a lovely name. It fits you like a glove." He paused a moment. "I wish I *did* understand music. Your enjoyment of it is—is infectious; it must be wonderful to get so much pleasure out of anything. Sometimes a great piece of Art by a master affects me that way. Perhaps, if I grew more familiar——"

She interrupted him, eagerly.

"That's what I say!"

"Well—why can't I go with you to some of these concerts. You could explain it to me before we went, so I'd understand."

Her eyes widened and her face grew bright at the suggestion.

"Why,—why not?" she exclaimed. "It isn't often that I can get away on Tante's account. I hate to deceive her

as I'm doing, but she doesn't understand what music means to me! I'm sure she wouldn't mind our going together. It isn't as though she hadn't met you."

"We'll have a wonderful time," Carey said. "Tell your aunt you're going to have dinner with one of your friends, and we'll go down town and dine! After that we can take in the concert or opera!"

"Opera!" she cried. "The opera by all means. I hate to confess it, but I've never been inside the Metropolitan Opera House."

"Nor have I!"

In their enthusiasm, their hands touched. For a moment Carey felt the warm tips of her fingers on his. A wave of colour rushed into her face and she drew away quickly, turning her head to hide it.

CHAPTER IV

SPRING was in the air. March had blown itself out with its own winds. April had come in cold and snowy. It did not seem as if the city would ever shake off the winter's grip. Then, suddenly, almost overnight, spring arrived. The sun blazed down, the air grew perceptibly warmer; there was an elusive green haze among the branches of the trees, so long denuded and dead. Carey felt it in his blood. His feet tingled with it; he imagined he was walking continually upon his toes. New York, like some prostrate giant, rose dripping and radiant from the cold bath of winter, and smiled. Ten days of delicious, penetrating sunny weather lashed the lagging spring, as a jockey flogs his horse. The tiny green buds fairly poked themselves out of their bursting shells and, before one was aware, spring had come.

Carey was happier than he had ever been in his life. He met Doctor Floherty on the street one day. It brought back to him the uneventful, dismal days at Mamma Muggins', and he saw himself, cooped up in his room under the roof, indifferent, lazy, asleep to the possibilities that lay about him, satisfied with the money his monogram-making brought him, stupid and sottish. It was hard to believe that it had been himself. Doctor Floherty was warm in his greeting. He wanted Carey to come and lunch with him some day, and Carey promised. The old

crowd at the Fillmore's had broken up; some Filipinos had come to board. It wasn't the same as it used to be. He wanted to congratulate Carey on his cover design on the *Consolidated Weekly*. It was a stunning thing.

The reproductions of the designs that Sherman had purchased confirmed what the Art Editor had predicted: they were more effective than the originals. The engraver's proofs had been sent to Carey for correction, but there were no changes to be made. The weave in the texture of the strawboard was almost lost, but enough remained to produce the effect of a Ben Day screen. It was discernible only in the background, and it gave the whole design a soft, rich tone. Carey was delighted.

Orders for work came in with satisfying regularity. Gernhardt, through the Frank Peabody Company, sent an order for another half dozen of Carey's heads. Sherman agreed to take twelve, to be run on the first issue of each month,—the fiction number. A big Philadelphia weekly rejected two that Carey had sent them, because they only used two colours; but *East and West* promptly took these and paid one hundred and fifty dollars apiece for them. The Art Editor of *Overman's* wrote him that Mr. Ben Mercy had mentioned some cover designs by Mr. Williams that were unusual and, if he would give *Overman's* a look at them, the Art Editor would promise a prompt decision. Carey considered his answer for some time. It was a strong temptation to square accounts with this man for the rude, inconsiderate manner in which he had treated Carey only a few months before. He finally replied briefly that he sold his work only on order and, if the Art Editor wished to see him regarding it, he could find him during the mornings at The Rembrandt Studios. While there was nothing vin-

dictive about Carey, he enjoyed this retaliation hugely. Springer shared the feeling. The Art Editor of *Overman's* was well known for his treatment of artists, and none of the good men would accept work from him if they could afford to let it go.

Carey's liking for Springer increased rather than diminished. Constantly they went about together, to dinner, to the theatre, to the polo grounds when the baseball season opened. They discussed plans for spending the summer together and for sharing a studio the following season. In addition to the money he earned from his work, Springer had a steady income from a piece of business property in Flushing that his uncle had left him; and, with Carey's increasing popularity and rising prices, they felt they could afford more comfortable quarters and perhaps keep a servant.

One hot day toward the end of May, Springer and Carey drove out to the Park Casino in a hansom, and had breakfast. It was Sunday morning about eleven o'clock. The glass storm windows had been taken down, the red-striped canvas awning had been rolled down over the stone flagging, and the little round tables had been set out, each covered with its white cloth. Something compelling in the mellow sunshine and the green that was making itself evident in the trees and lawns had suggested the Casino as a pleasant spot for breakfast to others beside Carey and Springer. The place was filled, but they found a vacant table by the iron railing. About them arose a gay murmur of laughter and chatter. Carey had never seen so many gorgeously attired women. He was conscious of the spring millinery and the covert looks and remarks with which certain hats, more conspicuous than others, were discussed.

"Actresses!" Springer whispered to Carey across the

table. "They love to hang out here Sunday mornings. It's a bit early for 'em to be out, but I guess it's the weather. Good Lord, Carey, look at that creature in green! Upholstery, I call it."

It was a wonderful hour. The sun lay warm and grateful on Carey's neck. The birds twittered in the hedges and garden beds. The odour of coffee and broiling chops drifted appetizingly from the kitchen. There was a feeling of merriment and gaiety in the air. Every one was conscious of the golden morning. Several parties were opening champagne.

"As I live!" Springer exclaimed, "it's Myra!"

He jumped to his feet and wormed his way between the tables, and presently Carey saw him bending over a lady's chair. A strange emotion possessed Carey. Myra was the girl who had written Springer from Palm Beach. He felt certain he would be called over and introduced. At the moment, he would have given everything he possessed to have been spared the embarrassment of that introduction. He saw Springer being presented to the others at the table, and then caught his eye as he turned toward him and beckoned. It was an age before he reached them.

"Miss Rossiter—this is Mr. Williams."

Carey bowed. There were other introductions—another girl and two men, one of whom was rather fat and heavy-lidded. His cigar ashes lay in a cascade down the front of his bulging vest.

Myra Rossiter was even more beautiful than Carey expected from the innumerable photographs Springer had shown him. She was dressed exquisitely; her face, under the drooping lace that edged her hat, was faultless; her hair, brown and soft, hung low over her ears; her throat, where the lace came together at her breast, was

white and delicately curved as marble. Her beauty was the luscious type, lavish, prodigally luxuriant. Nothing about her suggested the type Carey knew her to be. Only, as she raised her eyes to Springer, there lurked in them, so he thought, a hint of the love she dared not show.

After they had finished eating, Carey and Springer wandered out into the Park. For a brief moment, when they had risen from the table, Carey caught Myra Rossiter's eye. She turned as they made their way toward the broad steps to the driveway, and smiled at Springer when he bowed. There was a separate little nod for Carey. It was pleasant and friendly, and a sudden liking for her rose within him. It increased his admiration for his friend who had the affection of a girl so radiantly beautiful, so unaffectedly gracious, no matter what the conduct of her life might be. As they sauntered along the concrete walks that wound under the trees, Springer told him of his first meeting with Myra and their relationship. She was a Weber and Fields girl, one of the choicest of those that made up that chorus, so celebrated for its beauty. He had wandered into a Broadway café with a friend. Myra and another girl were sitting at a table across the room, with two young boys, both much affected by the champagne they had been liberally ordering. They were obviously rich men's sons squandering their money. Springer raised his glass as Myra looked toward him, and she returned his smile. Presently he went over and spoke to her. She greeted him as an old friend and, while the two youths glowered at him, not knowing whether or not to resent his intrusion, she asked him to take her home. The other girl was a chance acquaintance; the boys would soon be too drunk to know what they were about.

That had been the beginning. A friend of the stage

director, Cunningham Bates,—the fat man with the drooping eyelids, who had been with her at the Casino—was paying the rent of the apartment in which she lived on Fortieth Street. He was the manager of one of the biggest suit and cloak concerns in the city. Fortunately he was often out of town, but he was extremely jealous of Myra, and was always laying traps to catch her at a double game. The minute he left town, she would ring up Springer, and the two would have a mad round of reckless enjoyment, not parting from one another until he returned.

“And if he came back unexpectedly?” Carey asked.

Springer shrugged his shoulders.

“He did once, but she lied out of it. Did you see him look at me to-day? He suspects she’s playing him, and she stands an uncomfortably close chance of having him wring her pretty little neck if he ever finds her out.”

Carey looked at him, puzzled and interested. Springer cared so little for this wonderful girl’s favour. He would throw it aside like an old coat some day. At present, her beauty, and the admiration she excited, flattered him. Other men envied him. He enjoyed Carey’s wonder and interest. It was of small consequence to him that Myra loved him. He had always treated her squarely, he told Carey, frankly informing her that he had no money to throw away. When they were out together, he paid the bills; when they ate at her apartment, she was the hostess. There were too many women in the world, he said, for him ever to be content with one.

It was all true; Carey knew Springer was not lying. It was that which made it all appear so unutterably bewildering. As Springer talked on in his free, unreserved manner, Carey’s heart writhed within him. To have some one love him as Myra Rossiter loved Fleming Springer! Oh,—that would be too wonderful to be ever

possible! Even the fat suit-and-cloak man, who was being duped and laughed at, he envied. To provide for such a creature, and at least command her pretended affection, was worth while. Carey longed for some woman's love. He asked nothing more than her companionship. He was not ready for marriage. He had never experienced the desire for it; it did not occur to him. It only seemed to him extremely beautiful for these two people—so graciously favoured, so young and lithe—to wander about the city together, happy in each other's company, enjoying their pleasures, utterly irresponsible.

He said as much to Springer. The other burst into one of his infectious laughs.

"Good God, man! What are you kicking at? Haven't you got Cecilia Shaughnessy? She's worth a thousand Myras!"

Carey was dumb. His mind whirled about in a swift vortex of thought. It kept on spinning all the rest of the afternoon and far into the night. Anna's face kept bobbing up before him; he saw again her convulsed shoulders heaving in her soundless mirth; he heard once more her supplicating cry of "Jerry! Oh, my darling!" Then came the purple, congested face and the starting eyeballs! Round and round buzzed his thoughts: Anna—Myra—Cecilia! Anna—Myra—Cecilia!

Toward supper time, he went up to Mark Harrison's room, and together they drank a great deal of whiskey. It left him unaffected and cold. When, finally, he fell asleep, his troubled thoughts gave him no rest. Myra came to him, beautiful and graceful, diaphanous draperies floating about her. Hand in hand, he fled with her through long forest glades. Beneath the towering trees, the ground was soggy and marshy. Often he stumbled, his feet slipping from under him. He heard

her voice calling him. Then it was the fat suit-and-cloak manager who pursued him, and her voice reached his ears mockingly. He woke tired and in the grip of acute neuralgia. He tried to make some coffee for himself on the tiny gas stove, but the small round-bottomed saucepan slipped on the iron prongs of the burner and upset.

When Cecilia arrived, she found him lying on the couch, a towel across his eyes to shade them from the glaring reflection of the sun that streamed in through the huge skylight above his head. She was full of sympathy. She did not offer to go; she hung up her hat and long, loose coat and presently brought him some tea and held the saucer while he leaned upon one elbow, draining the strong, hot, soothing brew from the cup. Then she pushed his drawing table close to the couch, tilting its surface to intercept the blinding north light, and presently she began to play. The music swept majestically up into the treble, like a wave spreading itself fan-like over the sand, and, pausing, rushed precipitately down into the bass. The cadences of the swift rippling measures never varied as the girl's white hands ran lightly from one end of the piano to the other. Carey, where he lay, could see the shadow of Cecilia's back as it swung to and fro like a pendulum. Silently he sat up and watched her.

Round went his thoughts in the giddy whirl that had possessed his mind through the preceding night and day.

"Cecilia—*my* Cecilia!" His lips formed the words. Why not? Just as Myra was Springer's Myra. He saw Cecilia and himself loitering over their breakfast cups; he saw them wandering in the country together, stopping for the night at some wayside inn, to rise early to go on in the morning; he saw them dining at some curious

café and going to the theatre, settling comfortably in their seats, waiting for the play to begin; he saw her looking up at him with love shining out from her grey eyes as it had shone from Myra's when she turned her face up toward Springer's.

He had risen and was standing behind her as her slim body followed her hands up and down the instrument. Suddenly he gripped her in his arms, thrusting his face to hers, close, his lips against her half opened mouth, so that the edge of her teeth hurt him as he pressed her to him.

"Ugh!—Ah-h!"

With both hands against his chest, Cecilia pushed him from her. For a moment they regarded each other, the girl struggling to catch her breath. Then she struck him,—the knuckles clenched, the heel of the palm out,—struck him fiercely, with every ounce of strength she possessed, bringing her half-shut fist down upon his unprotected face. With every blow, a gasp of fury escaped her.

"You beast—beast—beast—beast—beast!"

Carey staggered back against the couch, covering his bruised face with both his hands. He heard the long, quivering intake of her breath and the dry sobs that shook her as she stood swaying before him. He did not look up. Unsteadily she walked toward where her hat and long coat lay. She did not wait to put them on. She picked them up and opened the studio door. Carey raised his head in time to see it close behind her.

Slowly he rose to his feet, regarding the empty studio dazedly. His eyes rested on the open piano that a few moments before had vibrated to the rippling cadenzas that flowed from her nimble fingers. It was impossible that so much had happened in so brief a space of time! In less than two minutes the irreparable had occurred. That

was the end of Cecilia Shaughnessy! She would never enter *his* life again.

Wearily, his feet dragging after him, he passed into the bathroom to examine his bruised face. Beneath his left eye lay the mark of her knuckles. He bathed this in cold water, applying to it the witch hazel he used after shaving with a saturated end of the towel. As he dabbed at the spot, he gazed reflectively into his own eyes that stared back at him from the mirror.

He paused a moment, his brow darkening.

"You fool!" he said, addressing himself. "You unutterable ass!"

God! What a *fool* he had been! What a *clumsy fool*! That was what hurt him most to remember. He had bungled the business pitifully, unforgivably. How Springer would laugh at him if he knew! Carey thumped the top of his aching head and shut his eyes as the humiliation and the shame of what had happened swept over him.

"Fool! Fool! Fool!" he said aloud.

At first he was concerned only with the sorry figure he had cut. He had aspired to follow in Springer's footsteps—and what a mess he had made of it! Presently, however, he began to consider Cecilia,—poor, shy, timid Cecilia. Undoubtedly, she had told herself with pride that she understood men, that she could trust her intuition, that Carey was different from the others, that with him it was safe to go to his studio, sure of his consideration and respect. Carey sank down on the edge of the bath tub and buried his face in his hands. The contempt with which he regarded himself was past expression.

After a while he began to analyse the situation. It was bad; but it might have been worse. He was in no sense in love with Cecilia; he had liked her. She had been

companionable and an excellent model. He had drawn so many portraits of her, he felt sure he could "fake" her face in any pose that was necessary. It made little difference to him whether or not he ever saw her again. That did not matter. What hurt him like a twisting sword blade through his heart was that he had so misjudged her, that he had outraged her so unforgivably, had so demeaned himself in her eyes.

Half inspired by a desire to do the thing that would be hardest, half prompted by the wish to correct an utterly false impression he had given regarding her virtue, he determined to tell Springer the truth about her and to confess to him what an utter fool he had been.

He found him in his studio, busily working over some pen-and-ink headings he was making for one of the fiction monthlies. He burst into his confession, blurting out the details of the final episode, wandering back to the account of his call upon her at her home, his walk with her in the Park, returning again to the time when, to make himself appear as a man of the world in Springer's eyes, he had deliberately insinuated that she was his mistress. He had to shut his eyes when he came to this, forcing the words from him by sheer force of will. He refused to show himself any mercy, but stated the facts baldly, proffering no excuses. It was a bitter ordeal for Carey, but he compelled himself to go through with it unflinchingly.

When he had finished it was some time before Springer spoke. While Carey rambled on, he had continued at his work, his face a few inches from his pen point. Occasionally he would tip back in his chair, squinting his eyes at his work, twisting his head from side to side.

Having delivered himself of all there was to say, Carey

grimly determined to add nothing more. He waited for Springer to break the silence. A sick fear filled his soul that his friend was too disgusted with him to speak his mind.

"I never did think she was that kind of a girl," Springer said at length.

Carey waited for what he would say in condemnation of his own miserable part, but, presumably, Springer intended to make no further comment.

"I say, Carey, Myra's coming down to take dinner with me. Why don't you come along? You know me! If I didn't want to have you, you'd never get asked!"

It was Carey's turn to delay his answer. A rush of affection for Springer overwhelmed him. He realised they understood each other; it was the nearest they could come to expressing their true feelings. He had not thought Springer capable of so much sentiment, at least with regard to himself. Since he had come to know him, he had often thought of Joe Downer; he had conceived much the same sort of blind affection for Springer that Joe had for himself. He strove to conceal it, but he knew that Springer was aware of it; he was accustomed to adoration from both men and women. Not until this moment had he given Carey any reason to believe that his affection was returned in any degree. Springer did not propose to judge him; he presumably had occasions of his own to remember when he had made a mess of things. Searching about for some way in which to convey this idea to Carey, he had proposed that he accompany Myra and himself to dinner. It would have indicated that Carey had not caught his meaning, if he declined the invitation.

Picking up one of Tilford's pipes, Carey began forcing the damp tobacco into its bowl.

"You're a king, Springer," he said. Each silently pursued his own train of thought, and presently Carey asked:

"I don't suppose you'll dress?"

"Good Lord, no."

They met Myra in the ladies' waiting room at the *Knickerbocker Hotel*. She was a vision of loveliness. She wore a severely simple gown of clinging black silk, set off with tiny ornaments of jade, while about her neck hung a beautifully wrought gold-and-jade pendant. The demureness of this costume was in striking contrast to her hat of French straw, surmounted by a superb bird of paradise. There was not a trace of make-up on her delicately tinted skin. Her excessive beauty drew the eyes of men and women alike, and Carey, knowing that she must be conscious of the attention she attracted, marvelled at her affected indifference and carefully assumed ease of manner. Every gesture and every attitude were the result of careful study. She had grown so accustomed to admiration that it no longer embarrassed her, and her movements betrayed no suggestion of restraint.

They dined in the grill room of the hotel. At first a feeling that he was the unnecessary third person filled Carey with a certain diffidence. Springer was obviously anxious that he and Myra should be friends; but Carey knew that the girl's heart and eyes were for his friend alone. Not that she betrayed her preference by look or word; Carey was only conscious of it in his heart. She was very gracious, and she had an infectious little silvery laugh that ran up and down, which he thought delightful. The food and the wine warmed them, and presently all three seemed the best of friends.

Myra was being urged by some girl friends to join the

chorus of *The Belle of Mayfair*, a new Edwardes opera brought over from England, for which the company was being then assembled, owing to an early fall opening.

"It means a lot of hard work," she said, "and I'd like something better than just chorus. What I did when Lew Fields took me into *It Happened in Nordland* company suited me down to the ground. I never had a better time in my life than that winter." She smiled reminiscently.

Carey bent forward eagerly. This touch of stage life suggested a thousand other thrilling details. The theatre to him had always been what the enchanted land of princes and fairies is to a child. That Myra knew about all that happened behind the curtain of mystery thrilled and fascinated him. It threw an added glamour about her.

"I'm awfully soft, anyhow," she continued. "I haven't done any work for two years, and it would be dreadfully hard to get back into condition. It's exciting,—that's the only trouble—and I often long for the excitement."

"I bet you do," murmured Carey.

She smiled at his intentness. It was in marked contrast to Springer's obvious indifference. Carey felt she wanted his friend to show more interest. She appealed to him unconsciously on every topic that came up. Continually she sought his approval, absurdly and pathetically dreading the lack of it. Carey decided that she was more infatuated with Springer than in love with him. He felt sorry for her. Springer regarded her, he knew, as some exotic flower by which to be amused, from which to inhale the perfume, to be enjoyed for an idle hour. A wave of dizzying emotion swept over Carey at the thought of how eagerly he would return her affection were he in Springer's place.

They were still discussing the advisability of her going back to the stage. Carey was absorbed in everything she said. As he leaned toward her, his elbows on the table, he was aware of a delicious fragrance that emanated from her. It was the subtlest of perfumes, but not the less intoxicatingly sweet. She was a ravishing creature. He noted in turn the tiny transparent lobe of her ear,—the soft triangle of pink flesh beneath it formed by her hair and the curve of her cheek,—the limpid, glistening eyes, so bright and clear, elongated and narrowing toward her temples,—the delicate, sensitive nostril,—the cupid's bow of her red lips that now and then parted in a smile that showed her twinkling teeth. But it was the swiftly changing colour in her cheek that fascinated him. Bending close, he watched it come and go, flooding her face a warm pink when she laughed heartily, leaving it an alabaster white when it ebbed. He could barely discern the fine particles of powder upon her nose. Only in the elongation of the almond-shaped eyes did she betray her class. It was a very slight sign, but it was unmistakable.

So intent was he in studying her that he unconsciously leaned further toward her than he intended. He was made aware of the absurdity of his attitude by Springer's laugh.

"Good Lord, man! You'll bore two holes straight through the woman if you stare at her that way! Have a heart!"

Myra reached for his hand and drew it into her lap.

"Now, let him alone," she said. "I like Mr. Carey Williams very much."

Carey's head swam. The touch of her long, slim fingers sent the blood pounding from his heart. He knew he was blushing; his face burnt as if it was afire. They both laughed at him, and he feebly attempted to

join them. He tried to concentrate his mind, watching Springer tap the end of a cigarette against the back of his hand to shift the tobacco from its mouthpiece; but the touch of her slim fingers still lingered; the palms of his hands were moist and his lips were dry and hard.

He did not regain control of himself even when they were outside, although the nimble wind of the night was like a dash of cold water in his face. It was tacitly understood that he was to leave them now. They would drop into some vaudeville show or garden of pleasure before they went home. Carey turned to Myra and she held out her hand. Springer was giving an order to the starter for a taxicab. As Carey's fingers closed gently over the girl's, a wild desire rose in his heart to have her know how much he liked her.

"We both are good friends of his," he said, "and I want you and I to be good friends as well."

The smile was whipped from her lips as she looked up into Carey's eyes, her own troubled and serious.

"You love him, too," she whispered. "I know it. Let me have him as long as I can hold him. Promise you'll help me!"

Carey drew a trembling breath; his lips quivered; a slight dizziness blurred the exquisite features so near his own.

"I promise. But when that is—is over, will you promise *me* something!" he stammered.

"Yes—anything," she answered carelessly.

He helped her into the taxi-cab and waved to Springer who leaned out of the window as they whirled away.

Carey walked home. That Myra was a prostitute, that she was deliberately deceiving the man to whom she had sold her virtue, that she was lost to all sense of decency,

mattered not to Carey. She seemed to him wonderfully beautiful, young and pure. And Springer was so clean and fine and handsome. He speculated on their mating, and it struck him that there could be nothing vile or sordid about it. They were so young, so perfectly made, so god-like. His heart ached for some such experience of his own. It was the call of the female that stirred him. It was spring, and all the world was mating. There was nothing sensual about this yearning. With Anna Blanchard, it had been the animal in him that awakened. She had roused a side of his nature of which, until then, he had been unconscious. But now, he was lonely. He wanted a comrade, a woman whom he could love and protect, and who would love him in return,—love him the way Myra loved. God! He'd work his two hands to the bone for such a love. It was the most precious thing in life! Some day, sometime, some woman would learn how deeply he could love.

CHAPTER V

CROWDING events that pursued Carey these days were brought to an abrupt halt by the arrival of a special delivery letter from Joe Downer. Carey had gone with Springer to a dance at one of the Columbia College fraternity houses the night before, and had reached his bed after six o'clock in the morning. It was the persistent ringing of the postman at a quarter past eight that finally roused him. His first sensation, as he sat upon the side of his bed, while the electric bell continued its compelling summons, was that he had smoked too much. His mouth was brassy, his throat burned. Sleep clung to him tenaciously, weighing down his eyelids, while his head swung helplessly from side to side. Between each prolonged vibration of the bell, he lapsed back into complete unconsciousness. A peremptory knock, added to the irritating whirring, at last brought him to sufficient wakefulness to stumble to the door, dazedly open it, sign for, and receive the letter.

When he again awoke, it was almost two in the afternoon. On the table lay the letter where he had dropped it before he had fallen back into bed. Now, with his mind clear, he picked it up and turned it over in his hand, a disquieting apprehension filling his heart. He knew it was about his mother before he opened it, and, simultaneously with the thought of her, there rose within him an

accusing sense of neglectfulness. He had failed her as he had failed his father. There were so many things he might have done that would have brightened her life. With a fervent hope that his fear was unfounded and that there still remained time in which he could make reparation, he forced his finger under the flap and burst the envelope open.

His apprehension was correct. Joe wrote his customary page or so of rambling inconsequences: Carey must be prepared for a terrible shock,—he had not wired, and so on and so on,—he wished he might *tell* Carey what he must, instead of *writing* it. Every one knew what a bad hand he was at writing——

Carey impatiently turned the page and his eye leaped half way down it until he caught the word "mother." From there on he read and re-read the words, and when he had finished the letter he sat with the sheets held limply in his hand, gazing with a cold, blank stare vacantly before him.

It was cancer. For some months, his mother had complained of internal pains, and Joe had urged her to see a doctor. Mrs. Williams would not consent; she scoffed at the idea, refusing to consider the matter. But one of her friends finally persuaded her, and the terrible fact was at once discovered. Mrs. Williams was not told the result of the diagnosis. It was too late to operate; it was only a question of time; it might be weeks; she might live for a couple of years. The doctors did not know, but both physicians who had made the examination thought that her son should come home at once.

As he sat there, unseeing, there occurred to Carey instance after instance of his mother's gentleness and goodness, countless evidences of her love for himself, her patience and forbearance. He could match every one of

these with a thoughtless, unkind act of his own. Hers had not been a happy life. Simple and shy, of limited mentality, she had married a man to whom she was utterly unsuited. The responsibility lay, probably, with her husband. She would have married any man who had asked her. Carey's father had remedied his mistake in a ruthless, characteristic manner, but his wife had had to endure the results of hers to the bitter end. She had lived on, harassed by business cares, deserted by both husband and son, beset by imaginary worries, alone,—with but one or two old women like herself to count upon as friends,—finally to be afflicted by a lingering and offensive disease that must inevitably prove fatal!

As he sat holding his head in his hands, Carey, with all the strength he possessed, gripped his throbbing temples as if to strangle the pain of his regret. He felt he could not wait to see his mother again. The memory of all his petty grievances against her, the oft-repeated accusation that she had lost her capacity to sympathise with him, her doubts and mistrust of him, the instances of her petulant nagging,—all were swept away in the surge of blinding pity and love that filled his heart. He gave no consideration now to his work, or his career, or to his one and twenty self-indulgences. The thought of Myra, even of unoffending Cecilia, sickened him. The only pang was at the thought of parting from Springer,—Springer, with whom he was to have spent the summer,—Springer, with whom he was to have shared a studio next year!

As if some telepathic manner of communication existed between them and Springer had unconsciously become aware of Carey's distress, the telephone—which Carey had muffled so that he would be able to sleep that morning—at this moment began to click feebly. Carey

would have been surprised if any other voice had replied to his "Hello!"

"Are you awake yet?"

"Yes. I want to see you right away."

"Can't come now. I'm only in my underclothes. You come down."

"No,—I'm just out of bed. Hurry into something. It's important. I'm in trouble and I've got to see you."

"All right."

It was hardly a minute before Springer, clad in an army shirt and painting trousers, his feet in wicker sandals, squatted tailor-fashion on Carey's bed, a cigarette between his lips, the drops of water still glistening in his hair from the sousing to which he subjected it every morning.

Carey told him about his mother.

"It's as little as I can do," he concluded. "I don't know how long I shall have to be away. It rather knocks our plans on the head. I hoped that you and I——"

Springer interrupted him.

"I know—I know. We'll have to postpone that. I'll stick round here till July, and then I may run down to Wilmington to see Jenkins. Perhaps you will be back by October. I'll wait for you—Tilley doesn't want to move. Now, you'd better get out of here at once. There's always a train for Chicago any time of day. Sling what you will want right away into your suitcase, and I'll send your trunk after you. How are you off for cash?"

It was the attitude that this calamity was a mutual sorrow and must be mutually borne that Carey found so generous and characteristic of Springer. He had just experienced a feeling of being left alone in the world, and it warmed his heart to realise the depth and permanence of this friendship.

The same thought returned to him again as the train began its dark passage through the black tunnels by which it wormed its way out from beneath the city. There was Joe, too—faithful, clumsy Joe. He could count on these two friends, and while his mother was permitted to live, he would show her a devotion that would make up to some extent for the years she had wanted it and found it lacking.

Home again. It was very different from his last home coming. He had returned six months before, still a boy, with a boy's whining grievances against the world, extravagant in his speech, arrogant in his opinions. He considered he knew much more of the world now; things in his home town struck him as being more provincial than ever; his mental horizon had broadened; he had entered into man's estate.

There was no question that he had changed. His clothes had the smartness he had copied from Springer, and he had acquired something of Springer's genial manner and free-limbed carriage. There was some subtle difference in him as well. Joe remarked upon it when he met him at the station; some quality in Carey by which Joe had held his affection in the past seemed gone. It rather flattered Carey to think that the change in him was so obvious. He hoped his old friends of the Pen and Brush Club would notice it.

Thinking only of the change in himself, Carey was unprepared for the terrible change he found in his mother. The healthy, brown warmth of her cheeks had changed to the pallid greyness of a tallow candle; her hair was the same, but thinner, and wisps of it hung about her ears where before it had always been bound so snugly; her eyes had dropped back into their

sockets and the cheek bones had become more prominent; her lips had begun to pucker like the mouth of a draw-string bag. Carey buried his face in the lap of the thin silk dress she wore, and tears marked both their faces as his mother smoothed his hair with gentle, feeble strokes. Not for a long time had mother and son felt so close to one another.

In the weeks that followed, Carey carried out his resolve to make what reparation was possible for his past neglect. It was more difficult than he imagined, for his mother was querulous and exacting. Her son never knew whether or not she recognised the nature of her ailment. She never admitted it, but always spoke of being well again soon and of coming to visit him in New York. There was always talk of a new serum the doctor was going to give her. She never despaired of recovery. The disease, however, affected her mind and the nature of her thoughts. Carey was continually called upon to agree with her in the most flagrantly inaccurate assertions. Strange hallucinations regarding his father possessed her. One of these was that her husband had been a drunkard. She worked herself into an alarming state of agitation on the day she confided this to Carey, assuring him that, up to the present moment, she had kept the fact "locked in the fastness of her heart for twenty years." Her son had been given every chance to retain and cultivate his natural love for his father. She had never so much as hinted to him of his father's weakness. She had felt it was only fair to her boy and to the man whose son he was, that he should respect and look up to him. Carey must not judge his father by his unwarranted treatment of herself. She had her shortcomings and, presumably, she had not done all she might have done to make him happy. What woman was perfect?

But she had been faithful to him and borne him a son,—a fine son,—of whom he would have been justly proud. She did not deserve to be thrust aside like a worn-out glove, to be cast into the discard as worthless, a faded, used up . . .

Tears would interrupt this broken recital, which was resumed again as soon as Carey had sufficiently comforted her. For many years afterwards he recalled those summer afternoons. No matter what the weather, there was always a tiny fire that smouldered and flickered in the grate. His mother derived a certain comfort from the companionable little flame, and Carey arranged for this fire to be laid every morning and throughout the day kept it gently replenished. About ten o'clock—sometimes an hour later—his mother would come down the stairs, one careful step at a time, the arm of faithful old Mrs. Harris, who was companion, nurse and housekeeper all in one, firmly about her. Carey usually met them at the foot of the stairs to catch her arm and hand when the balustrade's support ended.

Invariably he asked as he kissed her:

"What kind of a night, mother?"

Invariably she shook her head slowly, shutting her eyes at its memory.

"Pain—pain. I don't sleep very well, my son."

Then, through the long hours of what remained of the morning, and through the longer hours of the afternoon, she would sit in her black wicker armchair by the little grate fire, a knitted, beribboned shawl about her shoulders, reciting to Carey, who usually sat on a pillow, cross-legged at her feet, the sad and happy reminiscences of her life. Outside, the hot, western sunshine streamed down unbroken on flat, hard sidewalks; behind them, the lace curtains at the front windows gently bellied out into

the room with every puff of wind. Beside the black coal and the wavering flame in the grate, a tall bunch of pampas plumes stood on the hearthstone in a china umbrella rack, promoted to that service years before; on the opposite side was an onyx-topped, spindle-legged table on which reposed a Rogers group entitled *Taking the Oath and Drawing Rations*, acquired by the family with other heirlooms when Carey's father's sister had died. These two things, and the coal hod and fender, were all that came within the limited range of his vision. Above his head, the black shadow of the broad mantel and its dark crimson lambrequin hung oppressively. With a cadence that now furiously hurried, and now irritatingly lagged behind, the ticking of the old brass clock that stood with its back against the gigantic mirror above the mantel, kept up a constant, thin, minor accompaniment to the complaining notes of his mother's voice.

Carey's mind wandered. It was unutterably sad to sit beside his dying mother and listen to the reminiscences of her gay youth, alternated with bitter criticism of his father. It was easier to give her his apparent attention and let his thoughts carry him back to New York and Springer, his cosy studio waiting for him, and the work he had just begun. Staring into the fire-light, he used to picture Broadway by day, and again by night. He saw the hurrying streams of people that passed each other on either side of the street, the crawling lines of trolley cars, the unending succession of teams and automobiles, all hemmed in between the unbroken ranks of shops and office buildings and theatres, theatres, office buildings and shops,—a colossal thoroughfare, the great, throbbing artery of the city. Then, with the dusk, came the fire signs, pricking themselves out of the half light, growing more gorgeous and more brilliant with the vanishing

day. Sputtering white arc lights, the glowing eyes of motor cars, the glare of electrics from the brilliant interiors of shops and restaurants, the reflections of powerful lamps upon huge advertisements lifted high upon some façade or building top, pendent balls of fire, orange and violet,—lights, lights, a magnificent prodigality of them—flashing, winking, glowing,—making it a fairy-land of glory. And he could hear the great noise of the street, that rose, a harsh, pulsing droning by day, changing to a sustained, high vibration by night.

He saw himself with Springer in the lounge-lined café at *Martin's*, drinking something from tall glasses, leaning elbows on the marble-topped tables, smoking innumerable cigarettes, while the pile of saucers that indicated the number and amount of their orders grew higher and higher. Then they were dining at the *Hofbräu*, and he could hear again the jangle of the bell that announced the opening of a fresh keg of beer. There was Louis, the red-headed waiter at *Moquin's*, who always found them Camembert cheese of the proper ripeness, and set it before them with a flourish, never omitting the exclamation:

"Voilà, Messieurs! Le fromage qui marche tout seul!"

There was *Lüchow's* and the *Chat Noir* and *Browne's Chop House*, and the *Café des Ambassadeurs*, and the gay Yacht Room at the *Arena*, and the *White Horse Tavern*, and the *Café Boulevard*, and *Jack's*,—always *Jack's*, befittingly last. Glorious memories they seemed to him, even those he had shared with Jerry Hart. He found it hard now to condemn his former companion. If he stopped to consider the matter, Jerry was a contemptible rascal, of course—but he and Carey had had some splendid times together at Van Cortland Park, at

Coney Island, roaming the city with only a few dimes and quarters jingling in their pockets!

Out of the haze of these happy recollections, the features of one exquisite face persistently haunted him. Myra, with the tip of her porcelain ear showing just below the brown waves of her soft hair, the swift changing colour beneath her transparent skin, her limpid, glistening eyes, elongated, narrowing toward her temples. It was that characteristic of her eyes which pursued him, the one flaw in otherwise perfect beauty, the one indication that betrayed the coarseness of her soul. Had he been less simple and unsophisticated, he might have found it repulsive, a distressing blemish. As it was, it drew his attention as an imperfection that emphasised her loveliness. It fascinated him as might the thumb mark of a thief upon a clear bit of window glass.

After his mother had gone to bed, Carey used to spend most of his evenings with Joe. They acquired the habit of playing cribbage together, and sat up often until midnight. Joe was still the same even-tempered, quiet, humble friend, loving in the same dog-like fashion. It was irritating at times, but, in his heart, Carey genuinely appreciated his devotion. He returned Joe's affection in his own way; Joe would always be the rock foundation upon which he built his life. It was inevitable they should drift apart, however, with the many and varied interests that had come into Carey's life. The subtle change that had distressed Joe was that he was no longer necessary to Carey. When they had been together in New York, and even during the last visit home at Christmas, the boy had confided unreservedly in his older friend. He had told him about the Fillmore household and his work, about Jerry Hart and Anna, had even analysed and dis-

cussed his impulses and most intimate feelings with him. Now, Joe was conscious of a certain reserve and self-reliance that Carey had not displayed before. The difference in their relationship was apparent also to Carey, but he could not bring himself to tell Joe about Springer or the episode of Cecilia, always to be an unpleasant recollection. It was not to be thought of, that he should mention Myra. Joe would resent Springer's influence and, being incapable of understanding such a character, would disparage him in the clumsy way Carey knew so well. With regard to Cecilia, he would be certain to exonerate Carey and characterise the girl as an adventuress. Myra would appear to him as nothing more or less than a woman of the streets.

Carey told Joe, however, about the success he had made with his pretty-girl heads; and, as days stretched into weeks and weeks into months, and his mother's condition did not vary, he sent for some bundles of straw-board and set to work once more. Joe offered him his studio, and Carey spent an hour or so there every afternoon.

One of the orders he received in his forwarded mail, was from a calendar publishing company, which made him two offers, one a cash payment of five thousand dollars for twelve heads, the other to compensate him on a royalty basis. Joe urged him to agree to the latter only and insisted that Carey demand a contract. Other commissions he received that pleased him were an order for six heads from *Society*, a high-grade fashion periodical,—one from *The Feminine World* for the cover of their Christmas issue,—and a commission for a single head from Hawkins and Cooper, a big advertising agency, for which they offered him five hundred dollars. Two heads, he had sent, unsolicited, to *Mirth*,

were both accepted at three hundred dollars apiece. It was a delightful thought, that his work would appear simultaneously on various periodicals, and so many covers by the same man were bound to attract attention. New York would recognise him,—not the editors, nor even the magazine readers,—but the city itself! One particular order indicating that this possibility was not far distant, came from the office of Charles Claridge, the theatrical manager, who wanted a life-size likeness of Ethel Harricot, one of his leading stars, noted for her glorious crown of red hair, who was to go *en tour* in repertoire. For this poster he asked and received five hundred dollars.

As the demand for his work increased in New York, it was somewhat irritating to realise that very few in his home city knew anything about it. His acquaintances met him on the street and inquired with a pleasant interest how he was getting along. They all assumed that he had failed and had come home again to make the best living he could at his old work. They clapped him on the back and said:

"Well, New York's a hard place, I hear; I'm glad you're back again. Hope you stay." Others who knew him more intimately and were aware of his mother's condition felt called upon to add, after they had enquired about her: "Guess you're glad to be home. Home's good enough for me! I thought to myself, when you went to New York, 'that boy won't stand it long among those cold-blooded folk.' Our boys always come home."

Carey listened patiently and smiled, but he hated them in his heart. After the first cynical smile which one of them had assumed when Carey explained that he was only home for a visit and would return to New York shortly, he kept the information to himself and left them to their own inferences. It was hard to be patient. He

passionately longed to be back in the city where his ability was recognised and he commanded respect and attention. He suspected that even Joe did not appreciate what a success he had already made.

He tried to satisfy himself with long letters to Springer. They were full of questions which Springer never answered, when he actually accomplished the feat of a reply. Springer could not write letters, or, rather, the effort it cost him was so irksome that he would not. A month passed after Carey reached home before he received any word from him and then it only came in response to an insistent telegram. His communications were confined to comments on the weather, which was always hot; to the fact that he was well, and he hoped Carey was likewise, and that his mother was "mending"; everybody was out of town, and he hoped Carey would soon be back. Such, in varying forms, constituted his communications. Only once did he mention Myra, and that in the first that Carey received. He wrote: "Myra sends love!" The message thrilled Carey; he often thought about it.

July passed, hot and dusty; August followed, a little hotter, a little more dusty. September dragged out its existence, with a promise of rain from day to day, that was never fulfilled. Even the townspeople complained of the weather; but to Carey it seemed suffocating, insupportable. A west wind, that invariably sprang up in the afternoon, blew the smoke from the tall factory chimneys across the river down through the streets, and into the open windows of the houses. It was a thick, dirty smoke, reeking with the odour of chemicals, brassy and poisonous. Carey grew to dread the nauseating stench of

it; he wondered how he ever had been able to be happy in his home city.

He found disillusion also at the Pen and Brush Club, once his delight. The members now seemed utterly complacent, satisfied with their own petty achievements, praising and criticising each other's work, fostering the idea that theirs was a rarefied circle, undefiled by commercialism, where Art was pursued for Art's sake alone. In their hearts, Carey told himself, it was self-distrust and fear that actuated them; not one of them could sell his picture or poem, or whatever it was he produced. Those who had succeeded in earning a living by their work had gone to New York.

Carey would give vent to his contempt and indignation in long talks with Joe after their cribbage was over. Joe would listen placidly, slowly nodding his head in tacit agreement with Carey's arraignment of his former club-mates. But one of Joe's mild comments made Carey wonder, when he recalled it later, whether Joe was in as perfect accord with him on this and other subjects as he appeared.

"I wonder if your meteoric success hasn't turned your head a bit, boy," Joe had said. "If there didn't happen to be a demand for your work, would you feel about the fellows at the Club the same way? Poetry is a drug on the market; some of what the boys have written, perhaps you will admit, is better Art and more worth while than a girl's head you are able to dash off in an hour and sell for five hundred dollars."

Carey had been too interested in his own point of view to reply to this particular argument. Afterwards, it recurred to him, and the more he thought about it the more he was nettled. It was all very well for Joe to talk; he was not better off than the rest of 'em; he would

be obliged to get behind a counter and sell haberdashery or silk-by-the-yard if it weren't for the snug fifty dollars a month his father's insurance brought him! Nobody had given *him* a helping hand. He had won his laurels by his own brain. He had used only five hundred dollars of his inheritance! The thought of the twenty-two thousand that would be his in a few months, to do with as he pleased, drove the irritation at Joe's dubious remarks out of his head.

October brought the delayed rain, and as if Nature were inclined to make up for her neglect, the water streamed down out of the sky; it rolled off the roofs, choking the drain pipes; the gutters spouted. The clouds would break tantalisingly, revealing a patch of blue, then form again in a thick, leaden mass to deluge the city like a saturated sponge in a giant's hand.

With windows tightly closed, the fire blazing brightly, his mother would sit in her black wicker armchair, and tell Carey for the thousandth time how his father had come home night after night to be helped upstairs by the cabman, falling insensate upon the bed, or turning upon her with coarse, abusive language. Again and again he must listen to the long account of how she had protected him from ever learning his father's weakness, that natural affection might not be checked. Outside, the rain would beat steadily against the windows, maintaining a monotonous roar upon the tin roof over the kitchen porch. Inside, the air would grow uncomfortably warm and close; the fire would crackle and snap; the brass clock would tick its uneven accompaniment to the complaining voice that went on and on, querulously, unceasingly.

"I *will* stick it out!" Carey told himself fiercely. "It can't be much longer; I'll always be glad of it the rest of my life."

He had a real letter from Springer the following week, incoherent in places, but full of the gossip and information for which Carey's heart ached. Springer wanted to know "when the hell he was coming back"; Tilley was going to get married,—a fat heiress,—and Mark Harrison wanted him to take a studio apartment on East Tenth Street. He'd much prefer waiting for Carey, if he knew what his plans were. He understood the situation and how hard it was for Carey to answer him; but, if it looked as if he wouldn't be back for some time to come, Springer guessed he'd have to take up Harrison's proposition. He knew Carey would see the point. They missed him very much,—everybody was talking about his work and asking when he was going to return. Myra was threatening to quit Cunningham Bates and go back to the stage. He hadn't seen her for a long time. There was a new girl he was crazy about—she was studying singing—going into opera. She had a wonderful voice and could trill like a nightingale. Her name was Violet Burns,—had a sister, and the two lived at the *Hotel Grenoble*. Carey would guess a long time before he could think of whom Springer had met up there at tea one afternoon. Cecilia Shaughnessy! She had been quite decent and had asked about Carey, whose work, it appeared, had given her a lot of publicity. On account of it she had done very well as a professional accompanist. People spoke of her as the girl with the Carey Williams hair. Springer thought she was better looking than she used to be. It was stupid trotting round town alone. He had gone on a swell party on Columbus Day. A young actor named Gerald Crofts, who had a bunch of kale, had taken a crowd of his friends in his big motor boat down to the *Larchmont Yacht Club*. The club was out of commission, but Crofts had arranged for a swell meal.

There had been eighteen of them, and they had danced till five o'clock in the morning, everybody "lit to the eyes." The shows were all rotten; he and Harrison had been going to *Hammerstein's*. Did Carey want to join the *Salmagundi Club*? He had just become a member and was having a lot of fun with the fellows who belonged. They had had a masquerade and Springer had never seen such stunning costumes.

Carey read the letter once a day, and sometimes oftener. In his longing to share with some one the exquisite joy and delight it gave him, he read it aloud to Joe Downer in a moment of exuberant spirits. Joe was at work lettering some window cards for a kodak store. He made no comment upon Carey's enthusiasm, and Carey, suspecting disapproval in his silence, turned angrily upon him.

"God! Joe,—you make me mad! Can't you be polite, —can't you say something decent instead of sitting there like an oyster? I read this letter to you because it meant a lot to me; I supposed you'd be interested!"

Joe looked at him, surprised at the outburst. He was too honest to lie.

"I didn't say anything, did I, Carey? I don't approve of such people, and that kind of high life doesn't appeal to me. I can't think your friend Springer is the sort of a person I like to see you so intimate with. Feeling these things, I thought it better to keep still than to say anything at all, and now you jump me because——"

Carey seized his hat and umbrella, and cut Joe's words off by slamming the studio door behind him. He strode out into the wet street, his nerves breaking his control, a raging desire burning in his heart to run down Front Street to the great glass-roofed terminal and jump aboard the next train for New York.

"New York—New York—New York."

The words sang in his ears, in his brain, and in his heart. He hated the rambling frame residences, the lopsided, brick houses, the yellow-tinted office buildings, the new court house, proudly pointed out, the over-head trolley wires, the cobble stones in the street, everything about his native city that was different from New York. And there wasn't a single thing about it that faintly resembled New York! He hated every stick and nail and stone that made it. He hated the fat, smug people, with their lagging walk; their habit of chatting in groups in the post-office, in the banks, on the corners; their rotten, malicious gossip. He hated his patronising, self-satisfied, pompous friends,—every one of them—yes—Joe included. He hated Joe Downer.

"My God! Why doesn't she die!"

He strode along a few steps, until the meaning of the words he had spoken aloud penetrated his excited brain. Then he stopped and stood still upon the curbing of the sidewalk, gazing down at the tiny torrent that gurgled in the gutter at his feet, while the rain beat down, steadily, vertically, persistently upon the roof of his umbrella.

The fire of revolt that had been smouldering in his heart for weeks had finally burst into flame. There was no longer any reason to continue his self-delusion. The words that had sprung involuntarily to his lips had betrayed the secret he had been trying to hide. Face to face with what seemed to him his rotten selfish soul, he had honestly to admit that he had been silently wishing this thing day by day for many weeks. Deliverance! That was what he had been praying for; the smashing of the chains that bound him fast to his enforced duty, galling and chafing his spirit. Night and day he dreamed of New York,—its freedom, its pleasures, its wild exhilara-

tion, its furious pace. He recognised in himself the personification of buoyant youth; New York was made for such as he. It was no place for the old, the weaklings, the failures.

But it was not in him to desert his mother. It never occurred to him to do that. The wish that had been growing in his heart, which the spoken words revealed, seemed to him unforgivable, a wish of hell, that only a debauched and shrivelled soul could possibly conceive.

Slowly he walked home. He thought he had been making reparation to his mother for his former neglect and thoughtlessness; he must now make reparation for the atrocious desire that he knew he should never be able to stifle.

It was horrible,—the thought that, while he bent over to kiss her, or fetched her shawl, or put his arm about her to support her unsteady steps, or tucked the Afghan quilt about her knees, deep in his heart was a passionate desire for that freedom which only her death could give.

Carey redoubled his efforts to be attentive to her, reading aloud to her, bringing her meals to her bedside, inventing ways of amusing her. He even declined the orders that came ever more persistently from New York, that he might spend more time with her. The desire to cheer and comfort her gave place to the grim satisfaction of self-punishment. There ceased to be any pleasure in his devotion; he drove himself through the days, hour by hour.

CHAPTER VI

MRS. WILLIAMS died on the nineteenth of November. She had been for some time under the influence of morphine, and steadily increased doses brought on frequent states of coma, during one of which she passed quietly away.

Carey was deeply affected. The intense love for his mother that he had experienced in The Rembrandt Studios when Joe's letter apprised him of her condition came surging back, bringing memories of her tenderness and unflinching devotion. There was a comforting and wholly satisfying thought that, in the six months she had been permitted to live, he had somewhat repaid her. There was not a single moment when he had showed her anything but kindness and gentle consideration. He had not weakened in his determination; it was a gratification to remember how sorely he had been tempted. He felt himself a better, stronger man. Mixed with these motions was the overwhelming sense of relief, the joy of freedom, the delight, he already commenced to anticipate, of returning to New York.

It was nearly three weeks after the funeral before he was able to get away. There was his mother's meagre property to settle, her debts to pay, her affairs to arrange. Carey put these matters into Joe's hands, but he was obliged to remain and help, for they found things in a

ridiculously tangled condition, almost impossible to straighten out. He insisted that Joe should sell off the real estate, even at a loss, pay the mortgages, and deposit what little remained in a local bank. Carey was determined to wash his hands forever of his native city. The estate, when entirely cleaned up, should net him something between seven and eight thousand dollars. Joe was to receive an administrator's fee for attending to the matter.

It was a cold, crisp day toward the middle of December, when, with a heavily-burdened redcap at his heels, he made his way up a temporary platform in the dismantled Grand Central Station, and saw the grinning countenances of Springer and Mark Harrison among the eager faces of the waiting crowd. Carey could only wring their hands, looking from one to the other. He had so often thought about his coming back to New York that, now that the moment had arrived, he was too much overwhelmed at the idea that he was actually in the city again to think consecutively or to act rationally. They all began to talk at once, Carey interrupting them every moment to exclaim:

"Isn't it wonderful—wonderful! I can't believe it yet! It's too good to be true! My God, boys, you don't know what I've been through!"

Harrison insisted upon their going across the street to the new *Belmont Hotel* bar to get a drink; but, before they went, Springer dragged him over to the news stand to show him six magazines, side by side in the first row on the counter; each of their cover designs was his work. It was staggering. There in concrete form it was almost ridiculous. Carey's head swam in a bewildering whirlpool of delightful emotion. His friends were here on either side; before him lay the evidence of his success;

every one was wanting his work; every one was praising it; New York eagerly waited to receive him. He stood on the threshold of his kingdom.

Rebounding from the suppression and stifling monotony of his six months at home, Carey was swept off his feet in the tumultuous rush of an elation greater than he had ever known. It was never clear in his mind what happened that day. He was drunk with excitement before one glass of liquor touched his lips; he was undeniably intoxicated by the time he had taken four. It seemed to him afterwards that he had been drunk and had sobered up half a dozen times during the day. The three spent several hours at a Turkish bath during the afternoon, and dined at *Shanley's* toward eight o'clock. There was one act of a comic opera Carey remembered sitting through, and much later an altercation between Springer, a hack driver and a policeman. In the morning, he found himself alone in a small, second-rate hotel, the name of which he forgot to ascertain, when, with head still swimming, he wandered out into the brilliant, cold street. It was not the way he had often imagined he would spend the day of his return; still, he had no regrets beyond the physical discomfort. The last human tie that had held him to a sense of responsibility was broken.

He found his quarters at The Rembrandt Studios much as he had left them. He was surprised, however, that the idea of picking up his life again among these surroundings had no attraction for him. It would not be the same without Springer down the hall. He made up his mind to move, and, with the decision he immediately became possessed with the determination to acquire at once what he had coveted so long—an establishment of tapestries and tall candlesticks, such as he had glimpsed

through a studio's open door the day he had called on John Seymore Jarvis.

Carey was making a great deal of money. It came in faster than he could keep track of it. Payments for the earlier work he had done had been deferred, some of them for six months after delivery. These now began to be realised. He was pleasantly surprised, upon looking up the amount of his deposits, to find he had a credit of over fifteen thousand dollars. The bonds left by his father had recently been turned over to him by the executors, and these, with what he expected to realise from the sale of his mother's small realty holdings, brought his worldly possessions gratifyingly near fifty thousand dollars.

"Not so bad for a chap not yet twenty-six," reflected Carey, gazing with approval at himself in his glass.

The quest for the new studio provided a great deal of pleasure for both Carey and Springer. They spent the better part of the following days together, inspecting possibilities in different sections of the city. They disagreed, even quarrelled, because both were so much interested in the project. They regretted keenly that it was not possible to share the same quarters; but to desert Harrison would be neither honourable nor friendly. Springer claimed it was just as well that living together was not feasible, as he and Carey would differ about so many things, that their opinions, constantly opposed, might have impaired their friendship. Besides, it would be impossible for Springer to live on the lavish scale Carey contemplated.

"I can't see what you want with a *studio de luxe*, with mahogany finish and nickel-plated fittings," Springer said in disgust. "It isn't the money. Damn the money!

If I had half of Rockefeller's millions, I'd root round till I found some dilapidated old stable, rip the insides out of it and remodel it to suit my taste. That would be some sport! It would have distinction to it! What you see in that Fifty-ninth Street peer's palace taxes my imagination. I'll bet ten dollars there isn't a real artist who makes his living by his work in that whole building. You'll find 'would-bes' there,—they fill three hundred such dumps in New York. They *play* at being artists. They are brokers and drab business men mostly, who have temperamental wives. I abominate such people!"

Carey found Springer was right. He consoled himself with the thought that he did not have to associate with them. They were the aliens in such quarters and not he. The studio was a duplex apartment, consisting of two bed rooms, a kitchen, bath, and the studio itself. It was the room in which he should work, that fascinated Carey. It was of magnificent proportions, particularly in height, and had a gallery running around three sides on which the bed rooms above opened. The beamed ceiling was nearly twenty-five feet from the floor. The finish was old English, and opposite the immense prised windows that flung light into the furthest corners, was a noble fireplace of carved white stone, large enough to contain a pair of tall, brass fire-dogs, beautifully wrought. The windows allowed a view of the Park only when they were open, but the prospect from the bed rooms above was unrestricted. On the morning Carey and Springer visited this studio, a heavy, clinging snow had fallen during the night, the first of the year, and every twig on every tree was encrusted with a white casing of crystal sugar. The sight from the upper windows was of entrancing beauty. The sun struck a dazzling multitude of twinkling sparks from every finger in a forest of white-

gloved hands that stretched heavenward. It was this sight that decided Carey. The establishment was much larger than he needed, the rent was exorbitant, he was obliged to keep a servant, and it would cost him three or four thousand dollars to furnish. But he was deaf to these arguments advanced by Springer. He knew he was wrong and his friend was right; he admitted it. That did not alter his decision. He caught Springer regarding him with a puzzled, distrustful look. It angered him for the moment and hardened his determination.

Once it was irrevocably decided, Springer's good humour returned, and an agreeable harmony prevailed between them with regard to the furnishing. In due time the paper was ripped off the walls, which were replastered and distempered a warm, golden brown. Oak shelves were built for the books and music, and Carey even rented a grand piano, for, although he could not use it himself, he had derived a certain companionable satisfaction from the instrument he had hired for Cecilia, and, besides, the presence of a grand piano gave the studio a certain dignity. He bought a Turkish rug, that nearly covered the studio floor, and three fine tapestries, four items which cost him over two thousand dollars. Tall gilt candlesticks supporting cathedral candles as thick as his arm, some heavily upholstered chairs, a great oak table with massive legs, hangings of grey-green monk's cloth, some vivid Chinese embroideries to drape the balustrade of the gallery, an immense painter's easel and model throne, whose presence could only be justified by the workmanlike effect they produced, successively were acquired and found their way into the studio. Carey thought that it would be an amusing idea that, because he was an artist, the studio should be devoid of pictures.

Springer ridiculed this as affectation. They compromised on a few large, well-chosen Japanese prints.

"It's all too commonplace, Carey," Springer said, surveying the room critically, when it was nearly finished. "Your bed room, with its yellow walls and cerise hangings is infinitely more effective. All this is like what the brokers and the business men downstairs and upstairs think an artist's studio should be. It's the way they fit up their apartments. You couldn't do any real work here if you had to."

"I think you are somewhat late with your criticism," said Carey, resentfully.

"Well, you've no business in this kind of a dude's studio, and I said so from the very first."

"And what do you mean by real work?" pursued Carey, seeking offence in the other's words.

"Oh, the devil!" Springer exclaimed in disgust. "You know it takes you less than an hour to do one of your heads. You've told me so repeatedly. If it took you a couple of days and you had to turn it out by the sweat of your soul, *that* would be hard work."

"I guess I know how hard I work," grumbled Carey.

"Oh, yes, I know all about that," Springer answered with spirit. "But look here, Carey, I've got something on my chest that I might as well get off now as any other time. Are you always going to keep on with this pretty-head stuff? Aren't you going to try something else some time? I'm not the kind of a friend that hears you criticised around and never tells you about it for fear of hurting your feelings. I'm only telling you what the fellows I know are saying."

"What fellows?" Carey demanded.

"The artists. You know 'em as well as I do. Nobody's going to take you seriously as a conscientious

workman as long as you continue to turn out combinations of this strawboard stunt of yours."

"They're jealous, that's the trouble with them," Carey retorted, after an uncomfortable silence.

Springer smiled.

"Not all of them. Some of 'em like you personally and would rather see you do something worth while than those damn heads. You've invented a stunt. You know it isn't Art as well as I do. Now that you've returned to New York, why don't you attempt some real illustrating? I know you too well to believe you're satisfied to continue to do this kind of work all the rest of your life. Just because the fool public likes 'em doesn't make 'em Art."

"I believe in Art for Life's sake, not in Art for Art's sake." Carey had heard some one say this, and he thought it an effective argument just now.

"I don't exactly know what you mean by that," his friend replied. "You think over what I say; sometime you'll be sorry you didn't try your hand at something else."

Dissatisfied as he might be with Springer's lack of enthusiasm about his work and his new abode, Carey himself was delighted with his studio. He had realised the dream that had been his since he arrived in New York. It was even greater fun than he had anticipated. If it had cost him nearly twice as much as he expected, he was consoled by the constant and persistent demand for his work. He put a fixed price of three hundred and fifty dollars upon each of his pretty girl heads, and did two, sometimes three, a week. Grumblingly the magazines paid his prices, but they paid them and sent him orders for more. Even *Overman's* was compelled by its subscribers to yield to the demand for Carey Williams' work.

Carey retained his studio in the Rembrandt building until January first. There he slept and worked while his Fifty-ninth Street apartment was being put into shape. Christmas caught him busy with the details of furnishing the kitchen, his own and servant's rooms, and providing the necessary china, glassware and napery. There was no dining room; his ordinary meals and the charming little dinners he intended giving were to be served in the studio. Carey expected this would be a delightful feature, and he arranged to have some round wooden tops made to fit over his long, massive oak table, and thus be able to seat comfortably six or eight, or even more, of his friends.

Also, he spent considerable time and money upon his wardrobe. As soon as he had returned, he had given an order to a Fifth Avenue tailor for several suits of clothes; his silk shirts, beautifully monogrammed, were made to his measure by another firm on the Avenue; his shoes, with cloth tops and small, fancy buttons, cost fifteen dollars a pair. He laid in a supply of socks and cravats, and even silk underwear on the same lavish scale. His fur overcoat, lined with matched skins, represented an investment of five hundred dollars.

Christmas Eve, Carey and Springer dined together at *Rector's*. They ordered their dinner carefully, and Carey insisted on champagne. The restaurant was filled with extravagantly-dressed women in décolleté gowns, their powdered white throats and shoulders alternating with the stiff, immaculate shirt fronts of their escorts. There was a note of gaiety in the mingling of the subdued voices, the clink of glasses, the rattle of silverware, the strains of the string orchestra at the further end of the rooms. Carey was reminded of the Sunday morning they had breakfasted at the Casino in the Park,—

the morning he had met Myra. He had been so engrossed with his new studio since his return that he had only given the girl an occasional thought. He wanted to meet her again; it was a pleasure he decided to defer until he was settled. Springer had told him what he knew of her the day Carey arrived in New York. She had seen him taking tea with Violet Burns and Cecilia one Saturday afternoon in the Palm Room at the *Waldorf*, and the next time he met her she had presumed to take a "high and mighty" tone, demanding to know who his friends were and what he meant by making love to another girl before her very eyes. Springer had lifted his hat, turned on his heel, and left her without another word. He was indignant that she should have dared to question him. Since then she had bombarded him with letters, telephone messages and presents. The first and last, never opened, he allowed to accumulate until a sufficient number warranted their return by messenger. The telephones he always cut short by hanging up the receiver. She had presumably decided to leave him alone, now, for he had had no word from her since Carey's return. There had been a row about the same time between her and Cunnie Bates, and she had gone back to the stage.

"It's where she belongs," said Springer, sourly. "She knew she had no business even to bow to me when I was with decent women."

"And how about the love making?" Carey asked, mischievously.

Springer dismissed the question with a curt, "Damn nonsense!" But Carey began to suspect, from frequent unaccounted for and unexpected "engagements," that Springer was spending a number of his evenings at the *Hotel Grenoble*. He knew his friend would confide in him if there was ever any need for confidence; but he

was not the marrying kind, and the affair, if one existed, was probably a mild flirtation, the innocuousness of which he was ashamed to admit.

It was partly the sensuous appeal of the atmosphere about them, partly the warming effect of the wine, that made Carey suddenly want to see Myra. She was in the chorus at the *Casino*, and although Springer had no further interest in her, and had not been to the *Casino* since the operetta in which she was appearing had opened, he might be persuaded to go. It was five minutes past eight and Christmas Eve. Still there was just a chance they might be able to get seats. Springer's answer to the suggestion was a grimace that eloquently expressed how little the idea appealed to him, but Carey was both pleading and insistent.

"If you can get seats this time of night," Springer compromised, "I'll go."

With a precipitation that attracted some attention, Carey left the restaurant. It was almost the half hour when he returned triumphantly, exhibiting two bits of pasteboard.

"They cost me ten dollars," he panted.

"You're going crazy," Springer returned good-humouredly.

They hurried into their hats and coats and caught a taxi in front of the restaurant.

It was only a few minutes after the curtain's rise when they reached their seats. Carey recognised Myra as he came down the aisle. She was second in a line of Dutch girls wearing white-winged caps and wooden shoes. They were singing the refrain to the *ingénue's* song. For the rest of the evening, while she was on the stage, his eyes never left her; he followed her movements, her en-

trances and exits, her changes of costume, with a fixed intentness that amused his companion.

"She certainly has got you on the run," Springer said banteringly.

Carey straightened himself, easing his constrained position, taking a long breath.

"My God, Springer," he said, his voice betraying his emotion, "how does a man like Cunningham Bates—what does he—what kind of a proposition does he make to a girl like that?"

Springer drew away from him in surprised disapproval.

"Don't be an utter fool, Carey! I said you were going crazy,—you *are* crazy! Why, Lord alive, man, there are too many suckers like Cunnie Bates flying round loose in this city for you to join the flock. A girl like Myra Rossiter will milk you of every little red penny you've got, if you're fool enough to mention money to her. Don't be an ass, Carey! I begin to think you are getting the big head, with your success and the easy money you make."

After this, Carey decided to keep his plans to himself. Some curious, unaccountable change grew noticeable in his friend. After the theatre, Springer had always wanted to make the rounds of the dance halls where, on such nights as Christmas Eve, all the habitués of the resorts were out in force, and where his advent always created a noticeable ripple of interest.

"Oh, here comes Fleming Springer!"

"Here's Fleming Springer!"

"It's Fleming Springer!"

Overheard, as he followed Springer to a vacant table, Carey took delight in these evidences of his friend's popularity. He enjoyed being seen with him. He, himself,

was becoming known, and now that his fame as an artist was rapidly spreading, he felt sure that such remarks, announcing Springer's entrance, were followed by:

"And that's his friend, Carey Williams; you know—Carey Williams—the fellow that draws all the magazine covers now'days!"

But to-night, Springer was either for going home or eating a mild supper at the *Café Martin*. Carey, disappointed, agreed to the supper, feeling that something was altogether wrong with Springer; but the concession of his having gone to the *Casino* was all that he could reasonably expect.

It was after they had eaten their grilled oysters and were finishing their second stein of beer that Carey caught sight of a well-known face at another table. It drew from him a glad, spontaneous cry:

"Jerry!"

The other had seen him, too, and Carey's name had sprung as readily to his lips. Together they rose and met half way, each eagerly seeking the other's hand, a smile of happy recognition on both faces.

"Why, you old terrapin!" Jerry exclaimed, wringing Carey's hand. "Who would have known you in such fancy trappings! You've become a sporty princeling! You look like a *matinée* idol! But you're the great Carey Williams now, I forgot!"

"You're the same old Jerry Hart!"

Both were laughing excitedly. If there had been any constraint in Jerry's manner at the very first, it was not noticeable after their hands met. Carey's cordial greeting left no room for any doubt that he had forgotten whatever resentment he might have cherished. Carey dismissed his grievance against Jerry as he might have tossed away the ashes from a cigarette.

"Can't you come over and join us? Who're y'with?"

"Those friends of mine from Murray Hill. They'll be beating it soon. Wait for me; I'll be with you as soon as they go!"

Carey returned to his table, still smiling with pleasure over the encounter, eager to tell Springer about Jerry. But Springer interrupted him as soon as he began.

"You've told me all about this fellow before, Carey. Isn't he the man who ruined the little girl at your boarding house and then cut loose?"

"Yes."

"Well, you'll have to excuse me from meeting that kind of a rotter. God knows, I've pretty elastic morals and I've been entirely too promiscuous. But that's where I draw the line, Carey. I never seduced a girl in my life, and I won't shake hands with a man who has. You and your friend can go and raise all the hell you want to to-night, but you can leave me out."

He rose as he finished and jerked his head at their waiter, who came hurrying up with the check.

Carey regarded him, surprised and hurt.

"It's hard for me to bear a grudge against any one like that, Springer. I'm not vindictive," he offered lamely.

Springer gave the waiter a bill, and paused a moment, his hand on a chair back.

"It isn't a question of a grudge," he said. "I wouldn't associate with a leper, and I won't mix with a man who I know is worse than a leper inside. I'm surprised, after what you have told me you went through on account of this person, that you now are willing to take up with him as if nothing had happened. I'm *damned* surprised. I'm beginning to think I've been mistaken in you altogether."

He left without further words, and Carey saw him

presently in the foyer, struggling into his overcoat that the hat-boy held for him. Carey sat sullenly making a paste of his cigar ashes and some beer drippings that had fallen into his plate from the bottom of his stein. He was regarding the mess, absently stirring it with the end of a match, telling himself that Springer was no longer the happy, free, pleasure-loving friend he had once so enjoyed following about, when Jerry came behind him, clapped him affectionately on the shoulder and slid into Springer's vacant chair.

At once was forgotten Carey's wavering resolve to tell him frankly that he had responded to an impulse to be friendly when he first had seen him, but the recollection of certain unhappy incidents made it impossible for them to resume their old relationship. He beckoned to the waiter and gave the order for what they wished to drink, then called him back and substituted champagne. Deliberately he shut his eyes to what he was doing. He knew only that he liked Jerry and that life was too short to treasure resentment. He refused to think about Anna, and her part in their reminiscences was carefully avoided.

It was a long night, with the relationship of the two one-time friends reversed. It was Carey who drove about in a hired automobile, showing Jerry new dance-halls, strange and lurid resorts, that evoked the other's surprise and wonder. In some of these it was gratifying to be recognised by the head waiter or floor manager, if only as Fleming Springer's friend. Once he thought he heard a girl whisper his name to her companion. Some wild excitement possessed him after that. He turned to the girl who had joined him at their table, his eyes roving wildly.

"Let's tear the lid off to-night! What do you say?"

Thereafter, wherever they went, Carey ordered a quart of wine, which was never finished; they left for another dance-hall before the bottle was half empty.

It was an orgy, a night of mad revel. Various incidents that happened during it, came back humiliatingly to Carey's sick and troubled mind the following morning. He dimly remembered insisting that the crowd of them,—the car was full of pick-ups of the night,—should accompany him to the Grand Central Station. He was intent on showing them at the news stand the row of six magazines whose covers he had drawn, never doubting that the arrangement had been preserved since the day of his arrival. There had also been a narrow escape from arrest when he was roughly prevented from continuing a rain of blows upon the padlocked door of a dimly lit florist shop. He had wanted to leave an order for an impressive floral piece to be sent to Myra. Jerry lay asleep in the tonneau of the car, insensible to everything. The chauffeur who had driven them about through the night—a kindly, pleasant-faced chap—interceded and offered to take Carey home. Vaguely, part of their conversation came back to him: the deep, reprimanding voice of the policeman and the deprecatory tone of the chauffeur and his oft-repeated phrase:

"He's only a kid—he's only a kid."

But what stung his smarting conscience like a whip-lash was the recollection of himself standing up in the automobile, as it sped along Broadway early in the evening, shouting out his own name to the staring faces of the pedestrians on the sidewalks:

"You know who I am? I'm Carey Williams; I'm the artist, Carey Williams!"

When he awoke, he found himself in his own quarters at The Rembrandt Studios, lying upon the couch

where he had been flung by whomever had carried him in. With the exception of his coat and vest, collar and tie, he was still dressed. These lay on the floor, in the middle of the room. The neckband of his shirt, still buttoned, was choking him painfully. He could feel the congested blood pounding in his head. With difficulty he wrenched his shirt open and lifted himself upon one elbow. The room swam round and round him, until he was compelled to shut his eyes. Never had he experienced such fierce physical agony after a night's debauch. He sank shuddering back upon the couch.

Outside, the church bells were cheerily ringing their summons to Christmas service.

CHAPTER VII

FIFTY thousand calendars by Carey Williams were sold in New York City before the first of the year; nearly that many were sold elsewhere. Carey's royalties came in a cheque from the publishing house for twenty-three thousand dollars.

The afternoon of the day it arrived, he bought a five-thousand-dollar motor car, a new model built on the most rakish lines. It was in this, ten days later, he drove Myra to Atlantic City, where they remained for what seemed to Carey ten days of luxuriant irresponsibility and lazy pleasure. If, after the first forty-eight hours, a disquieting doubt arose in his heart that, perhaps, he had been a little precipitate and that the arrangement lacked the romance he expected, he stifled the feeling as one of which he ought to be ashamed. He was troubled also by the coarseness of the girl's mind. Not that she was coarse in either speech or manner; it was rather the lack of cleanness and fineness in her he felt. He refused, however, to let these things worry him seriously.

Upon their arrival, he was far more concerned by self-consciousness, and the fear that people on the Board Walk, on the verandas, and in the lobby of their hotel at once recognised their illicit relationship. He suspected that it was palpable to every one. Myra gave him the benefit of her silvery laugh when he confessed this to her.

What observers thought had no terrors for her; their stares were incense to her. It was surprising how soon Carey himself grew used to it. Myra's beauty was more sumptuous than ever, and in the marvellous array of new frocks, coats and hats of which she had laid in a large supply before they left New York, she drew the admiration of every one. It required five trunks and as many hat trunks to contain her wardrobe for the brief visit to the seashore. Carey had paid Madam Osborne's bill, the Louise and the Maison de Blanc accounts cheerfully. If they had been twice their size, he would have paid them with as little thought. He wasn't sure of what he did these days. He felt giddy the greater part of the time.

If there were a sophisticated few who understood the situation, the majority saw in them only a bride and groom. It was their extreme youth that lent colour to this supposition. Outside of Myra's loveliness, the attention they attracted was only that of such idle curiosity as all brides and grooms awake. To the other guests in the hotel, Carey was a millionaire's son with his young wife, his transparent embarrassment, so obviously due to his new wedded happiness, an attractive and charming quality. Myra's ultra-fashionableness raised some doubts in the minds of a few of the older women, but she dressed in such perfect taste and preserved so disarming a demureness that these doubts were no more than passing.

On their way back to New York, they motored first to Philadelphia, and spent three days at the *Bellevue-Stratford*.

It was not until his return that Carey learned of Springer's marriage. Knowing how his friend would have ridiculed him if he had confided his plans to him, he had said nothing about his intentions regarding Myra,

nor had he told him that he was going to be out of town for a fortnight. His mail had accumulated during his absence to a surprising quantity. The Japanese, Naka, who was cook, butler and valet, had arranged it in neat piles upon the massive oak table in the studio. On top lay the three yellow envelopes containing Springer's telegrams. The first read:

"Where are you? I must see you at once."

The second was equally imperative:

"Call me up at my studio at once."

It was the third that affected Carey as a body blow. He sank into one of the deep upholstered chairs and stared at it blankly, occasionally drawing long breaths and rubbing his eyes vigorously, as if his eyesight were defective. He still wore his great fur coat, and his gauntlets lay in his lap. The Japanese moved silently about, drawing the silk runners across the high-primed windows, switching on the lights that lit the studio from the sides beneath the gallery, applying a match to the log fire already laid.

"Cecilia!" He kept repeating the name softly. Then, aloud, he said, speaking unconsciously: "Well, why the devil didn't he tell me!"

He felt that Springer had deceived him, that he had been hoodwinked. At the thought of his friend's defection—so it appeared to him—he experienced a curious sense of weakness; it was as if a prop had been knocked from under him. He glanced upward at the high roof of the studio and about its tapestried walls; swift thoughts of his new car and Myra passed through his mind. He felt abandoned, duped. Springer's action was treacherous. Where would he have found the courage, he asked, illogically, to have let himself in for "all this" if it hadn't been for Springer? He began to feel afraid.

Provoked and angry, he called up the Tenth Street studio. It was Mark Harrison who answered the telephone. A quick interchange of questions, answers and exclamations followed.

"I was equally surprised, Carey," Harrison said. "I knew he had some girl on the string by the way he acted. It was the fact that he didn't babble about her that made me think once or twice he meant business. He drove up here in a taxi last Tuesday;—walked into the room as if he hadn't a thing on his mind. 'Mark,' he says, 'I'm going to get married this afternoon; I'd like you to come along!' You can imagine how I felt. I looked at him kind of blankly; I couldn't think what to say. It made him sore. 'Damn,' he says, 'haven't I got a friend in this city to wish me luck?' I came to life then and said something that made him laugh. As soon as I had scrambled into my duds—he had to wait till I shaved—I went down with him to the taxi, and there sat the girl in the corner. 'Miss Shaughnessy,' he says, 'this is my friend Mark Harrison!' 'How do you do,' I says, and we all got into the taxi. Both of them were rather excited, as you may imagine, but old Fleming was as glum as an oyster. 'Isn't this kind of sudden?' I asked after a while. 'Yes,' he says, 'but it had to be that way,—and that's what I like about it, don't you, dear?' he says, turning to the girl. At that she begins to cry, and I sat there, feeling like a fool, looking out of the window all the rest of the way.

"We stopped at a priest's house back of that Catholic church up there on West Thirty-sixth Street, and all of us got out and went in. There's another girl and her little sister waiting for us. Her name was Burns, and, before we had a chance to say more than 'How do you do' to each other, the priest comes in and they're married in

less time than you could spin a quarter. Fleming kisses the girl spank on the mouth and calls her 'wife,' and I sign something and the damn thing's done, sealed and delivered. Flem says to me, 'I'll see you as soon as we get back; and I'm good for my share of the studio's rent.' 'Damn the studio's rent,' I says, 'where's Carey?' 'I wish to God I knew,' he says; and then he and his wife go down the stairs and get into the taxi and off they go.

"Miss Burns and I were standing on the stoop. She was mopping her eyes, and I ventured my same question again: 'Kind of sudden, wasn't it?' 'Yes,' says she, 'her aunt died.'

"And that's all I know, Carey. I never saw any one so crazy about a girl in my life! And I could have bet a fortune that he'd never be satisfied with any one girl enough to make her Mrs. Springer."

As Carey hung up the telephone, it occurred to him to wonder at the singular twist of the wheel of fortune by which Cecilia had become Springer's wife, and Myra his mistress. Springer had the best of the exchange. He was heartily glad that this was so. His loyalty and affection for Springer had not abated, and nothing was too good for his friend. Cecilia would make him a perfect wife, but he wondered about Springer's constancy.

Carey already felt a certain disillusionment with Myra. He had imagined that the compact between them would provide him with a companion as well as a mistress, but Myra was a creature of profound selfishness. She would consent to do only what appealed to her as agreeable. She had no consideration for Carey's wishes. Outside her love for Springer, her sole interests in life were her clothes and the preservation of her beauty. She was an orchid, a hybrid species, parasitic in mind and heart. Carey had hoped to establish a friendship between

them. Myra disgusted him by regarding their relation as purely one of business. It was her manner of existence; she possessed no other code. As much as her nature was capable, she loved Springer sincerely and passionately. Knowing that Carey understood this, she made for him no pretence of affection. He was hurt and jealous; but his jealousy was impersonal. Somehow, it never occurred to him to lay this at Springer's door.

He feared also that Myra held him rather in contempt, regarding him as what he knew he was: a "good thing,"—a kid with a "bunch of money." But, as with many other things these days, he shut his eyes to it. She was lovely,—and her beauty made up for a thousand shortcomings. Besides, he was proud of her, proud to be seen with her, proud of the fact that he was keeping a mistress.

He established her in a beautifully appointed apartment belonging to an actress—a friend of Myra's—who was playing a forty weeks' engagement on the Orpheum circuit in the west. It was situated on upper Broadway, near the *Ansonia Hotel*, and proved a dainty setting for Myra's exotic beauty. There were inlaid floors and glass-folding doors, rugs and soft brocade hangings. A colour scheme of old rose predominated, relieved here and there by Watteau figures in china, on panelled screens, in old seventeenth century prints. But the charm of visiting her here was always spoilt by an invariable encounter with Myra's women friends, even when he had announced by telephone his intention of coming out to see her. He met them on the steps, in the halls, comfortably established on the satin-covered settees and spindle-legged chairs of the tiny reception room, even in Myra's boudoir. They greeted him, he thought, with mock politeness. He fancied, when he heard their laughter and Myra's silvery ac-

companionment, that he was always the subject of their mirth. He was constantly finding occasion to reassure himself that he was fanciful, distrustful. He was too conscious of his youth, he told himself, and there was never any concrete evidence of the truth of his suspicions.

More comfort and satisfaction came to him in driving his new high-powered motor car. Myra insisted upon being properly dressed and heavily veiled, or otherwise she firmly declined to accompany him. Even when she consented, she refused to allow him to go fast. Nothing thrilled Carey's senses more than, when he reached a bit of straight road, to "let her out." He meant to establish a record that no machine had ever passed him. As a fox stalks a wild bird in the forest, he would mark some car far ahead of him as his prey and bear down upon it, keeping just ahead after he had passed it, for a few minutes, to give its occupants the full benefit of his dust and smoke. He preferred to have Mark Harrison accompany him, rather than Myra, and one night he discovered where McNeil and French modestly kept house on East Twelfth Street, and drove them over the Brooklyn Bridge to Coney Island and back.

One day, when he was on the way to get his car from the repair shop, he met Gregory Shilling on the street. The other did not remember him at first. Carey was much changed from the fledgling with awkward, boyish manners who had impulsively called on him nearly two years ago. As soon as Shilling identified him, he was effusively cordial, recalled Carey's visit perfectly, even remembered his name, and confessed he had watched his rise with enthusiastic interest. He told Carey he had related the story of his call upon him a score of times. He was delighted that Carey had taken the trouble to stop

him on the street and speak to him. He never would have recognised him.

The result of this chance encounter was an invitation from Shilling to be his guest at the Society of Illustrators' annual smoker at the *Berkeley Lyceum*; Shilling wanted him to dine with him beforehand; he was giving a dinner to a couple of cousins from Chicago. Carey was immensely gratified by his friendliness, and bought a new suit for the occasion. He determined to return the hospitality in a lavish manner.

Shilling entertained them at a restaurant called *The Alps*, an attractive, unpretentious place in the vicinity of his studio. Besides the cousins, two drab little fellows, well fitted to the name of Grey, the host had invited Merrivale, the Art Editor of the fashion magazine, *Society*, and Castle Jerome, another artist, at the top of his profession, whose work Carey had long admired. He was a man about fifty, very bald, with many gold teeth in his head. Two lower incisors in either side of his jaw, plated solidly with gold, gave the effect of a tiger's fangs. He was an admirable story-teller, and kept them all laughing; the dinner was a great success. They were still in a hilarious mood when, about a quarter to nine, they reached the *Berkeley Lyceum*. The theatre was already crowded, a thick haze of tobacco smoke rising above the heads of the audience composed entirely of men. As nothing was reserved, they found seats with difficulty, the party separating, Gregory Shilling piloting the two drab little cousins down a side aisle. Carey sat with Castle Jerome and Merrivale.

Everybody seemed to know everybody else. There were continued staccato greetings fired back and forth in the theatre, like tennis balls over a net.

"Oh you—Allan!"

"Hello there, Terry!"

"Har—ree! Oh Har—ree Grant!"

Carey was eager to have Merrivale point out the celebrities among the illustrators who were present. He was conscious others near him were looking at him and whispering his name. He saw Ben Mercy and Sherman, old Blake of the Occident, the detested Art Editor of *Overman's*, and a number of others to whom he was able to bow. Sitting next to him was a small person with a funny little putty nose and bushy eyebrows. He was evidently well-known and popular among his fellow-craftsmen. Presently Castle Jerome leaned across Carey to speak to him, and he made the pleasing discovery that his neighbour was Mason Edward Camp. Jerome, introducing him, mentioned him only as Mr. Williams. No one would ever identify him by his surname alone, thought Carey. He was a trifle chagrined at Jerome's indifference; he was sure that there wasn't a man in the theatre who was not jealous of his success and who would not be interested in knowing that the slight, blond fellow down there in the tenth row was the one who had the whole of New York City by the ears. He was composing a sentence by which he could tactfully apprise Mr. Camp of the fact that the Mr. Williams next to whom he was sitting was none other than *Carey* Williams, when a general shuffling of feet drew attention to a pompous, white-haired, fat little man with a white walrus moustache entering one of the stage boxes with a party of friends.

"That's Harry Lamberton Lewis," whispered Merrivale. "He takes himself pretty seriously, and the fellows are always quietly joshing him."

There prevailed an atmosphere of sustained excitement in the theatre. Long ago the last seat had been occupied and late-comers crowded the wide passage-way

back of the tiers of seats. Their faces banked the space beneath the brass rods that supported the short, plush curtains,—now tightly pushed back,—above the last line of orchestra chairs. There was a continual coming and going, men passing up and down the aisles, worming their way to and from their seats, squeezing past the row of intervening knees with laughing apologies. Part of the audience began to stamp impatiently; a number down in front commenced a song, immediately to be interrupted by cat-calls and howls from other parts of the house.

Suddenly there was a storm of vehement applause, a thundering acclamation from every pair of hands in the theatre.

"It's Charles Hanna Simpson," whispered Merrivale in Carey's ear. "They all love him; everybody does! Isn't he magnificent?"

A large, powerfully built man, with grizzled hair and moustache and a sharp, hawk-like face, stood at the railing of a stage box, acknowledging the welcome with a ceremonious bow. Carey leaned forward eagerly for an unobstructed view. He was deeply interested. Charles Hanna Simpson had been in the front rank of the best American illustrators for nearly twenty years. He possessed an international reputation, both as a painter and illustrator. Carey was impressed by his commanding bearing and the aloof dignity of the man.

There was another burst of hand-clapping. The leader of the orchestra,—a member of the Society,—stood up, glancing right and left at the upturned faces beneath him. He rapped smartly upon the rack in front of him with his *baton*, swung his extended arms together and led the little orchestra into the opening bars of the weird, oriental music he had composed for the occasion.

The performance consisted of two offerings, both writ-

ten by members of the Society and acted by them. Some professional girl models, excessively pretty and clever, took the female rôles. Carey wondered at their assurance and their indifference to the character of the audience. Both plays were broad, the first one amazingly clever, the second uproariously funny. Amused smiles were still on the faces of the audience as, in compact columns, it choked the narrow aisles and slowly emptied itself into the street, when the final curtain brought the entertainment to an end.

Carey was in high spirits. His presence at this affair, among these men of his profession, was the last gratifying touch of approval that was needed to make utterly complete the perfect enjoyment of his meteoric and astonishing success. He felt that his election to the Society of Illustrators was now inevitable and must shortly take place.

As he emerged from the hot, close theatre, the cold, night air filling his lungs affected him like a powerful stimulant. He didn't want the evening to be over; a craving for more excitement possessed him. As he reached the street, he slipped his hand under Merrivale's elbow.

"Can't we go some place and get something to eat?" he said. "We might get a bunch together—you know the fellows better than I do—I'd like to give a party."

"I dare say some of the boys will go across the street to *Sherry's* for a drink before they go home," Merrivale replied noncommittally.

"Well, let's go over, too, and see who's there," Carey suggested enthusiastically.

They said good-night to Gregory Shilling and his cousins and followed the straggling groups of twos and threes that made for the revolving glass door across

the street. They found some thirty or forty of the audience in the café, either standing at the bar or distributed among the tables. At a vacant one they seated themselves, and Carey ordered champagne. Merrivale protested at the needlessness of this, but Carey insisted.

It was simultaneous with the arrival of the wine that Ben Mercy and Mason Edward Camp entered the café. Impulsively, Carey jumped to his feet and intercepted them on their way to the bar, urging them to sit at his table. He felt that Mercy had always had a liking for him, and he was anxious to make a more definite impression on Camp. The Art Editor good-humouredly accepted for both, and Carey presently felt a glow of satisfaction and pride as he sat between the two magazine men where he could be seen by others in the café. He was gratified by Camp's show of interest in the methods by which he worked and he took pains to explain them to him, telling him of the strawboard and its remarkable properties. Both Mercy and the artist substituted milder drinks for the champagne Carey urged upon them, but a curly-headed, round-eye-glassed friend of Mercy's, who came up to speak to him, accepted Carey's invitation and drew up a chair. Carey didn't catch his name.

Some fifteen minutes later, the various groups at the bar and about the tables began to break up. As the men passed where they sat, most of them bowed or spoke to Ben Mercy and Merrivale. Carey's heart swelled with pride. It was very pleasant to be seen in such company, on apparently intimate terms. He was sure that when they were in the foyer, or had reached the street, the men who had passed him would ask each other who was the chap hobnobbing with the Art Editors. While he appeared to listen to Camp, he was composing an imaginary conversation. It dealt in varying forms

with the surprise they expressed when they learnt that he was Carey Williams.

These pleasing reflections were interrupted by the departure of Camp and Ben Mercy. The latter had to catch a train for his home in Mount Vernon. Merrivale, however, allowed himself to be persuaded to remain a little longer, and the curly-headed, round-eye-glassed man showed no inclination to go. Carey ordered another quart of wine.

The café was fast becoming empty. A group of five or six still lingered at the bar. They were listening attentively to an argument between two of their number. A tall man in a fur-collared overcoat and silk hat was emphasising the points he was making by firm slaps of his fingertips on the palm of his other hand. The one whom he addressed was short and stocky; his beard was scrawny, and his hair stuck out from under a broad-brimmed hat like stalks from a bale of hay.

"That's Graham Johns, the writer," Merrivale announced to Carey, noticing his attention. "He's always arguing about something. The little chap is Bonestell. I like his Indian stuff immensely, don't you? Bob Wilder is standing between them. He took the leading part to-night in Charley Miller's play. Clever, wasn't he?"

Carey regarded the group for some moments without answering Merrivale. An idea occurred to him and he rose slowly from his seat. Not until he was on his feet was he aware that the wine had strongly affected him. With careful deliberation he approached the bar.

"Will you gentlemen join us?" He indicated the table where Merrivale and the curly-headed, round-eye-glassed person were still sitting. He spoke slowly, taking pains to articulate each word distinctly.

Graham Johns paused for a moment, his hand sus-

pended in the air. They all turned and looked at him. Carey's eyes travelled from face to face, waiting for some one to answer him. They continued to stare blankly at him, a mild surprise in their attitude. The pause was long enough to be embarrassing. Carey felt his colour rising.

"Perhaps you don't know who I am," he said. It occurred to him that the information would have its effect. "I'm Carey Williams!"

No change in the fixed look on their faces followed the announcement. Then abruptly there was a diversion. Some one had entered the café behind him. He saw the gaze of the men he was addressing shift past him. Whoever it was possessed more interest for them at the moment than he did. He turned.

It was Charles Hanna Simpson, and he was drunk. He advanced and stood before Carey, towering above him, his silk hat a little on one side. For a brief moment they stared fixedly at one another, Simpson swaying slightly as he strove to retain his equilibrium.

"Did—did you say your name was—Carey Williams?" he asked. He lurched forward heavily, catching at the back of a chair to steady himself. Instinctively Carey sensed his attitude to be antagonistic. He nodded briefly.

"You could do American Art and the profession of the illustrator a lasting service if you wanted to, my young friend."

Simpson spoke with difficulty, the words sliding into one another, the sibilants coming from his lips hissing.

Carey did not answer. He continued to gaze fixedly at him, conscious of the silence and the tension of the situation. Simpson desired an answer.

"Do you want to know how?" he insisted.

Carey slowly inclined his head.

Simpson took a step nearer him.

"By cutting your throat from ear to ear!"

He indicated the operation with his forefinger. The motion cost him his balance. He swung sharply about and staggered toward the door. He did not turn round again, but pursued his way toward it and stumbled out into the foyer. The action was exceedingly ludicrous. The group of men at the bar burst into a laugh. Every one's attention reverted upon Carey. He saw a smile on the face of one of the bartenders.

Simpson's insult had been vicious. A stinging blow from his glove across Carey's face could not have been so effective. Still laughing, the men at the bar passed him, his utter discomfiture furnishing them, only too obviously, with satisfaction. The curly-headed, round-eye-glassed man, who had been drinking with Carey, rose from the table without even a nod for good-bye, and joined them as they left the café. Carey heard them laughing again in the foyer.

Merrivale came toward him.

"You mustn't mind Simpson. He didn't know what he was saying. . . . You'll pardon me if I run along with the others. Bonestell goes out my way. . . . Good night."

He held out his hand, and Carey took it mechanically. The other hurried out. Carey turned toward the bar; his face was burning.

"Champagne," he said, nodding at the bartender.

CHAPTER VIII

SOON after his return to New York, the daily newspaper possessing the largest circulation in the city had ordered from Carey three of his pretty girl heads. On the Sunday following the entertainment at the *Berkeley Lyceum*, the first of these appeared. It was reproduced in four colours and occupied a whole front page of the newspaper, dimensions in process work which had, up to that time, never been attained. The newspaper advertised the fact widely. Reproductions of Carey's work were tacked on the corner news stands, furnished free to news dealers, and were also pasted on the sides of the paper's delivery wagons. In the same issue was published a full page interview with Carey. A reporter and an artist had called upon him and while one asked him questions about his life and his preferences among types of women, the other drew sketches of him, at work bending over his drawing table, posed before his great easel, and seated at his piano. The timely appearance of this interview did much to mitigate the bitterness of the previous night's experience and the sting of Simpson's words. Again and again Carey told himself that it was all professional jealousy. Other men could not bear to stand by and witness the triumphant progress of his success. But, in spite of the oft-repeated reassurance, he writhed at the memory.

He was still in bed, the morning paper strewn over counterpane and floor, the dishes of his finished breakfast on a small mahogany table by his pillow, when Springer shouted his name from the studio below and came running upstairs. Carey bounded out of bed to meet him, and they pounded each other on the back in their clumsy manner of expressing their affection. Springer was radiant, and Carey thought he never had seen him so handsome, so clear eyed and clear skinned. He was glowing with youth. The story of the sudden marriage was ready on his lips.

Springer had realised, before Carey's return, that he was in love with Cecilia. He had had a difficult courtship; she would have nothing to do with him at first; but, in a curious way, they kept meeting each other. He determined to change her aversion for him; that had been the first motive to actuate him. Cecilia's friend, Violet Burns, had thought of the possibility of their falling in love with one another before it occurred to either of themselves. She had furthered the match in a quite efficacious way. Springer was under the delusion that it was she in whom he was interested. Since their marriage, both he and Cecilia had marvelled at the cleverness with which Violet Burns had thrown them together without their suspicions being roused. One night they went to see *Madam Butterfly*; it was the Savage production of the opera in English, at the Garden Theatre. Springer had been deeply affected; Cecilia, shaken to pieces by her emotion. On the way home, he had, without premeditation, asked her to marry him. Not until the question sprang to his lips had he realised he loved her. With the words, the miracle of love had entered his heart. That night, he could not sleep, nor did he go to bed. Two overwhelming emotions had possessed him

alternately: the great happiness his love brought him; the terrifying fear that he would lose it. For weeks she had refused to commit herself, and yet he was buoyed up by a conviction she returned his love.

The day after New Year's, Cecilia had found her aunt dead in her bed. It was a violent shock; she had telephoned Violet Burns, who had relayed the message to Springer. They both had hurried out to the Ninety-second Street apartment, to find her in an alarmingly nervous and hysterical condition. Her grandparents in Altoona, both of them past eighty years of age, were her only remaining relations. They could not make so long a journey. She had felt utterly abandoned. Violet Burns had urged her to come to the *Grenoble Hotel* and take a room adjoining her own. Springer had insisted that she marry him. The day after the funeral, she had consented, and that night Springer had tried to get in touch with Carey. He had telephoned a half dozen times, and finally had resorted to the telegrams. A week later, they had been married. They had spent their honeymoon in Altoona visiting the old grandparents. It had been their intention to stay but a few days; they had lingered for nearly six weeks.

Springer told his story in short, rapid sentences and joyous exclamations. He was artlessly radiant, and Carey, listening to his words and watching him intently, realised that he was looking at a changed man, that his friend had emerged from what had been an unlovely chrysalis, into a creature with wings. There was no trace of the gay, frivolous, laughing Don Juan left in him; he was an ardent lover, insane with the great happiness that had come to him.

"God, Carey!" he fervently exclaimed, "why don't you get married? It's the most marvellous, divinely

ecstatic state! I begrudge every day I was a bachelor. There's something about marriage that every happily married man recognises; but not one of us, no matter how eloquent, can possibly explain what that something is to you or any one unmarried. It's the same subtle something, I suppose, that divides the dead from the living. The dead are all wise to what death is; but, if they really have tried to communicate to us by mediums in spiritualistic messages, they have always found that telling us what we most want to know is impossible. It escapes them completely. If we lost our terror of death . . ."

Carey was not following. He was wondering how he should find the courage to tell Springer of his affair with Myra.

"Celia's absolutely the most wonderful girl in the world, Carey. She's so open minded; she understands a man and has a wonderfully keen insight into human nature. . . . Do you remember how old Tilley ragged me for raving about her the day she came into our studio?"

Carey again was not listening. He was speculating on what would have happened if he had never confessed to Springer that he had at first lied to him about the girl who was now his wife.

"—and we're going to live in Leonia——"

"Going to live in Leonia!" Carey interrupted.

"In Leonia," the other reiterated, in high good humour. "A number of artists who are married live over there; some of them I know almost intimately. Henry Lyell and Myron Davis both went to Art School with me, and besides there're J. Scott Franklin, MacGavin and Harry Thompson and Al Hamilton, and little Miss Mary Donohoe. You couldn't want a better crowd! Lyell's going out to Arizona to work up some Grand Canyon studies

for a big mural job he's got on hand, and he's letting Celia and me have his house, furnished, just as it stands, for fifty dollars. We're going to move in Monday."

Carey shut his lips firmly.

So this was the end of his friendship with Springer! He not only had supplanted him as his closest intimate and confidant by getting married, but he had to go and bury himself over the river in New Jersey among a lot of tame tabbies who sat round and criticised each other! Carey felt intensely annoyed and jealous. Grimly he determined Springer should not know it; Springer would some day remark to his wife in great astonishment that it had been a long time since he'd seen Carey. That should be his revenge.

"We want you to come over whenever you like, Carey, old man. I'll telephone you as soon as we get settled, and then you've got to be our first week-end guest." He paused a moment, regarding the other intently. "You know, Carey,—you're looking awfully seedy these days. You're hitting it up pretty lively,—you know you are. I wish to God I had known before I was married what I know now. There's nothing in this sporting life—*nothing*. Fellows used to tell me the same thing once; but, just as you are thinking now, I used to say to myself that *they* were the ones who didn't know what they were talking about. But we get wisdom—sooner or later—and I tell you, Carey, that you're killing yourself, drinking and running round the way you do."

Carey turned impatiently, struggling to control his fast rising anger.

"You're a great one to talk, Springer!" he said bitterly. "You've been the Czar of the tenderloin for I don't know how many years. Now you get married and begin to tell me to quit doing the things and going

to places you used to three hundred and sixty-five days in the year. Some of these joints you made pay by giving 'em a part of your much sought patronage."

"I'll not quarrel with you about it, Carey," Springer replied. "What I've said makes you sore. I'm sorry I was such a rounder; I'd like to live the last five or six years of my life over again. I presume I should have resented similar advice. You'll come to my way of thinking some day,—I *hope* you will. Until then, we won't talk about it."

Presently he went away, and Carey in disgust began to dress. Nothing he possessed, not even his success, seemed of any satisfaction to him. For the moment he hated Myra; his studio and its lavish appointments was a cumbersome burden; he had no friends that mattered to him. Life no longer contained any interest for him.

He telephoned to the garage and ordered his car brought round. Alone he drove it over to Long Island, and twice was halted and handed a summons for speeding. He spent the night at a road house, where he joined a party of motorists who were in a mood as reckless as his own.

The following week he devoted to serious work. He was surprised to find how many orders had accumulated, for he had not made more than two or three of his heads since the first of the year. Some of the publications, whose commissions he had agreed to accept, were becoming impatient. There seemed to be an ever increasing demand for his "heads." Orders for more came in every mail. Among these he picked and chose. Answering the letters that came to him became a burden. He formed the habit of driving down in his car to the *Plaza Hotel* and dictating his correspondence to

the public stenographer there. This gave place to the stenographer's daily visit of an hour to his studio. His mail was always interesting, troublesome though the answering of it might be. Besides the welcome communications containing cheques and orders from first-class publishing houses and magazines, there was a certain class of letters he came to term "pesky pesters." Pestiferous was the word he had in mind when he coined the phrase. These letters were from small concerns, minor publications, commercial houses and hotels, either offering ridiculously inadequate prices for his work, or asking him to quote his rates. Ignoring them was the only escape he had from their persistence. A certain portion of his letters contained appeals for posters from charitable organisations, and a great many were written by women. The last were of an astonishing variety; they came from rich women and poor women, wives of millionaires and shop girls. Invariably they offered to pose for him. After following up one or two of these from idle curiosity, he came to the conclusion that wisdom lay in meting out to them the same treatment he accorded to the "pesky pesters."

The great bulk of his correspondence was with manufacturers who solicited his endorsement of new articles they were about to place on the market. Some of these asked his permission to name the product after him. Carey appreciated this was good advertising and frequently gave his consent. He endorsed pipe tobacco, lead pencils, drawing ink, Chinese white, even shoes and a certain kind of glove he affected. In the stores they sold "Carey Williams collars," "Carey Williams perfume," "Carey Williams golf jackets" and "Carey Williams hats." There was the "Carey Williams" way for women to do their hair: the double plaits encircling the head;

"Carey Williams red" was a new colour; silks and fabrics were made up to match the shade of Cecilia's lovely hair. A new comic opera had a pony ballet that was composed of red-haired "Carey Williams girls."

It was all exciting, and Carey was gratified and flattered. His popularity was exhilarating. He found, however, a certain irritation in doing the same work over and over. Long ago he had exhausted his ingenuity in thinking up different postures and combinations for his red-haired girl. He drew her with tennis rackets, golf clubs and canoe paddles, in motoring regalia, in sweaters, in sailor blouses and yachting caps, in riding habits and hunting costumes, as a Spanish girl, a French girl, an Italian girl, wearing Indian beads and feathers, coquetting in Dutch caps and military busbys, peering out of carriage doors, peering in at cottage windows, looking up, looking down, looking over her shoulder, gazing directly from the picture. A gradual distaste for the sameness of the work grew into a loathing for it.

In the hope of providing a slight variation from the same features, the same shade of hair, he persuaded Myra to pose for him. She proved an excellent model, and Carey was congratulating himself on the substitution when the head he had done of her was returned by the magazine for which it was intended, with the request that the hair be changed to red and the "braided" coils indicated. It was evident that Carey had changed models; the new one was, of course, very beautiful and charming, but there was some appealing quality in the face of the "Irish girl" that every one had learned to love and expect. Carey disgustedly made the changes.

The adoption of a suggestion that Springer had given him during the earlier days of their acquaintance resulted in bringing in between four and five thousand dollars.

Springer had counselled him to stipulate, in selling a head, that the original drawing remain his property and that he dispose of only the reproduction rights to the magazine or publishing house. An exhibition of Harry Lamberton Lewis's water-colours at Macbeth's Galleries on Fifth Avenue suggested to him the idea of arranging for an exhibit of his own. He collected as many samples of his work as possible from the various publishing houses in New York City, and of these he selected about ninety, upon which he spent a week retouching and cleaning. Late in February the exhibition took place, and, during the three weeks it lasted, he sold seventy-four of his heads at prices ranging from fifty to a hundred dollars apiece. He spent the money at once in buying an electric brougham for Myra.

Myra was a constant source of expense to him. He could retain her affection only by elaborate presents, and, as time went on, he had to provide a more and more costly variety to evoke any expression of gratitude or pleasure. Even though he was as much infatuated as ever, and eagerly gathered up the crumbs of genuine feeling she occasionally let fall, he was far from being entirely deluded by her subterfuges. When he came to realise that there was no possibility of her ever learning to love him as she had loved Springer, he frankly acknowledged to himself that his "leg was being pulled." When he had had enough of the affair, he determined he would terminate the *liaison* abruptly and leave Myra to go back to the stage. He was perfectly willing to be played as a sucker only as long as there was any fun in it for himself.

Myra enjoyed the intimate little dinners Carey frequently gave at his studio. There were sometimes six, more often ten or a dozen persons at these affairs. Myra

provided the girls and Carey the dinner, the wine and the men. Gregory Shilling and Mark Harrison were constant guests and so was the young actor, Gerald Crofts, whom Myra had introduced. Crofts was independently rich and owned a car of the same make as Carey's. After dinner the party would crowd into the two motors and drive out to Yonkers, to some road house on Long Island, or to Scarsdale where Croft's married sister lived. The roads were in bad condition, the ruts frozen solid; but the drivers vied with one another in recklessness. After one of these trips, Carey was generally obliged to lay up his car in the repair shop for two or three days, sometimes longer. This inconvenience led him to get another automobile. From considering a twenty-five to twenty-eight hundred dollar purchase, he progressed by easy mental stages to the conclusion that a seven thousand dollar foreign car was the most economical and satisfactory in the long run. The arrival of a letter from Joe Downer announcing the sale of his real estate at home, and a credit of nine thousand, two hundred dollars resulting therefrom in a local bank, helped him materially to this decision.

The new motor was an intense joy to Carey. It was one of the low hung cars that were just coming into vogue, and attracted attention wherever he drove it; its colour scheme of bright yellow and crimson made it additionally conspicuous. Carey keenly enjoyed the sensation he created when, with Myra in a fetching motoring costume beside him, he joined the disjointed chain of motor-driven vehicles and carriages on Fifth Avenue and followed the slowly moving procession until it melted mysteriously away.

One Sunday, Carey took the car alone over the Fort Lee ferry and visited Springer and Cecilia in Leonia. He

was in an ill-temper as he drove the heavy automobile over the hard, rutty roads and was obliged frequently to stop to inquire his way. Leonia was as bare and cheerless as the flat palm of a giant's hand. Winter lay malignantly across the landscape, oppressive, grey, relentless. It was biting cold and snow would soon be falling.

Carey found the house at last, perched on the side of a hill. It was small and rambling, of a dingy whiteness, with storm glass partitions following the line of the porch. The garden was a twisted heap of brambles; piles of soiled snow marked where the drifts had gathered; a broken brick path wound its way up to the steps of the porch from the swing gate in the picket fence.

Springer and Cecilia appeared glad enough to see him, hauling him in, wringing his hand, shouting his name. But Carey felt their welcome was forced. They were cordial because they wanted to be, but they weren't really glad to see him. Whatever had been the ties of friendship between himself and Cecilia, between himself and Springer, were broken now; the common ground on which heretofore they had met was gone. There was something condescending in their attitudes toward him; something "sweetly cordial"; Carey felt that each wished to impress him with the fact that they had entirely forgotten the days of their old separate association with him when it was he that had been their closest intimate, that the memory of moments and incidents in their past friendships with him which he still cherished and happily recalled, they now had ceased to remember. They had formed a comradeship of their own, one much deeper and more wonderful than theirs had ever been with Carey. He could not comprehend the perfect understanding *they* had reached!

They insisted he should stay to dinner; they would not

hear of his returning to the city without sitting down with them; they refused to listen to his objections. Carey, soon realised that his misgivings as to the wisdom of accepting their invitation were justified. Springer was irritatingly smug about his happiness. He had changed astonishingly. His old infectious recklessness was gone; his rash impulsiveness was curbed; he was sobered; his charm, his youth, his buoyant adolescence had lost their bloom. His supreme self-complacency, his complete satisfaction with his wedded happiness was provoking. While there was no reference made to the topic on which they had recently disagreed, Carey sensed in his attitude a desire to show him that *he* was in the right. Cecilia, however, impressed him as more interesting. She, too, had changed very definitely; she had become more mellow, richer, riper, rounder. There was no trace of embarrassment in her greeting, nor did there remain any suggestion of her old, shy manner. In fact, she Christian-named Carey at once, but he thought he recognised in her manner toward him, that of the woman who has wedded the man of her choice and is at pains to be kind and considerate to her discarded lover. She was a trifle too solicitous and attentive.

The inside of the house they had rented from Henry Lyell struck Carey as extremely commonplace, and they seemed equally so. He marvelled at the change in both of them. Cecilia had loved the world of living, breathing people, where every day some event of vital interest occurred to quicken the imagination, give zest to one's existence. Springer had been all eagerness for such living; he had set the pace for the pack to follow. Now, Carey found him with one of Cecilia's aprons tied high up under his arms, slowly cranking an ice-cream freezer while his wife sprinkled flour in the bottom of the pan

that had held the roast, and scraped it into paste for the gravy. Carey sat on a hard, wooden chair in the hot kitchen while dinner was being prepared. Steam poured from under the lids of several saucepans on the stove, and the smell of boiling vegetables choked the heated air. Springer shouted at him above the creaking of the ice-cream freezer, and Cecilia continually passed between them as she needed one thing after another from the closet beside him. Dinner was a succession of the proverbial comments of all newly-married couples. Carey remembered some of their exact phrases as legends to pictures in *Mirth*. Cecilia related a long story about the day Mark Harrison had come to dinner, and the steak she was broiling caught on fire and nearly burnt the house down. Springer asserted the hot biscuits Cecilia made as quite equal to the ones his mother baked in the old home in Waterbury. Carey wondered what they would have thought had they suspected how ridiculous he thought them. They were typical "newly-weds," dismally uninteresting to any one save themselves.

Cecilia cleared after each course, Springer offering to help and being firmly refused, as such assistance was considered unmanly by his wife.

"We had an awful fight at first," Springer confided to Carey, "over washing the dishes. Celia refused point blank to let me do it, and I was equally firm. I couldn't have her out there slaving away while I sat in here comfortably smoking. We finally compromised; she does the washing and I wipe. We have regular races to see whether I can keep up with her. She's as quick as lightning. I'm going to get a Swede as soon as we make another payment on the lot."

They were eager to tell Carey about the bungalow they intended to build. Violet Burns had a brother who

was an architect; he had drawn the plans for them for nothing. They got out the blueprints and spread them out on the dining-room table, pushing back the silver-ware and the soiled dinner dishes, weighing down the curling edges of the heavy paper with the salt and pepper casters.

See, here was the ground floor plan: here was the long, wide living-room running the whole length of the house; the big fireplace was to be here, windows there and there. It was all to be so original: there was to be no entrance hall-way; there was to be no dining-room; there were to be French windows opening on to the garden; there was to be a pergola and a red tile flooring.

"How very original!" Carey murmured, but they didn't catch his sarcasm.

"And you must walk over and see the lot," Springer said enthusiastically.

But here Carey balked. He was sorry he couldn't stay longer,—he had to get back to the city,—he had a date,—he'd be over again soon. He clambered back into his powerful car with a sense of relief and revengeful satisfaction that they must return to their dish-washing without any of the help he felt sure they had expected him to contribute.

It was on the ferry boat on the way home that he met Doctor Floherty. They had not seen each other for a year, not since their chance meeting on the street soon after Carey had begun to live at The Rembrandt Studios. The Doctor was now in charge of the laboratory at St. Vincent's Hospital. He was satisfied with his work and was well contented. He was engaged in making some interesting experiments in cultures, for which his duties in connection with the hospital work allowed him time. He was eager to have Carey tell about himself; his success seemed to the Doctor a marvellous achievement, and

he wanted to hear Carey's own account of it. His simple admiration, the interest and almost deference he showed, went far to dispel the unsatisfactory feeling the visit to Leonia had left behind. Carey thawed under the warmth of the Doctor's friendliness. He decided he liked him very much; they promised they were going to see a great deal more of one another.

In answer to his inquiries, the Doctor told him that he had long ago left the Fillmores. Durrant and Lambert were the only two of the old crowd who still lived there; a cheap class of young clerks from the American Tobacco Company filled the house and there were also some Filipinos. The doctor was living on One Hundred and Seventh Street, with some graduates of his medical fraternity.

When the boat bumped its way into the ferry slip on the New York side, Carey insisted that the doctor should get into his car and be driven wherever he wanted to go. Floherty had been playing bridge in Englewood, but had been obliged to stop early in order to get home and dress for a tea his aunt was giving at the *Buckingham* on Fifth Avenue.

As the car rolled out into the ferry depot, Carey stopped it at one side, out of the way of the traffic, and, getting out, went back to the news stand for a couple of boxes of his favourite cigarettes. He was feeling for the change in his pocket when his eye fell upon a magazine displayed upon the counter. It arrested his attention as if he had suddenly seen a thief's hand reaching for his purse. It was *Overman's*, and the design upon the cover might have been his own work, one of his pretty-girl heads,—only it was not! It was an excellent imitation, the same features, the same double plaits about the head, the same dull red shade of hair. Examining it closely,

Carey could see the texture of the strawboard showing faintly in the screen of the black plate. It was signed, boldly and distinctly, "Mason Edward Camp."

With amused, contemptuous interest, and yet feeling annoyed and angry, Carey bought the magazine and gave it to Doctor Floherty.

"'Imitation is the sincerest flattery,' they say, Doc," he remarked, climbing into his seat beneath the steering gear, "but can you beat that for unmitigated nerve!"

Indignation was still smouldering within him as he drove Floherty down to One Hundred and Seventh Street. The doctor and his three friends lived in an apartment on the ground floor. He prevailed upon Carey to come in with him and have a "nip," for a sharp wind had sprung up and their ears were tingling. In the tiny parlour, on a convertible couch, they found one of Floherty's house-mates asleep. His coat was over the back of a chair, his slippers had fallen from his white-socked feet, the Sunday papers lay in scattered sheets upon the floor. The sleeper's head had slid from the hard cushion over the edge of the couch and hung down, resting upon the sharp wooden support eight inches below the level of the seat. His mouth was open and he was snoring in prolonged, raucous inhalations.

Floherty began to laugh.

"It's old Mac," he said, "as good a scout as was ever made. Donald Graham MacTavish—can you match the Scotch of that?"

He raised his hand and brought it smartly down upon the white sole of his friend's foot.

"Hey there, Mac—wake up!" he commanded. "Wake up! You're strangling yourself."

MacTavish started, made an effort to sit up, and rolled ignominiously on to the floor.

Floherly and Carey shouted. The subject of their mirth gathered himself up and sat on the edge of the couch, rubbing his curly, sandy head, blinking first at one and then the other of them. Presently he joined in their laughter.

He was a pleasant-faced Scot, with racial traits evident in speech and feature. Across the bridge of his nose and beneath his eyes ran a broad band of freckles. He had a comical expression, and Carey watched him, amused and interested, as he struggled to throw off the last of his drowsiness, blinking and smiling good naturedly at them.

Floherly produced some Scotch whiskey and MacTavish suggested a toddy. They all went out into the kitchen, and Carey sat on the wash tubs while MacTavish, with the manner of an adept in such matters, began to putter with saucepans and crush lump sugar in a druggist's mortar.

It reminded Carey of the early, grey mornings during his first summer in New York, when Durrant, Jerry Hart, the Doctor and himself used to get their breakfast in the Fillmore's basement kitchen preparatory to their all-day visit to Van Cortlandt Park. Floherly and he recalled various incidents of those days, and presently they were in high spirits.

The hot Scotch was pronounced a great success, and MacTavish was pressed into making another. Under the influence of the two, Floherly decided that it would be impossible to waste the afternoon at a tea at the *Buckingham*. Carey suggested they all get into the car and drive out to *The Crow's Nest*, a road house just beyond Harlem that he and Springer had visited on the first night of their acquaintance. They would be certain to find a lively crowd there, as the Sunday liquor law was

never enforced, although the bar presented a closed appearance. Both Floherty and MacTavish were at once enthusiastic over the idea, and a lively scramble followed while they both changed into other clothes.

Carey drove them out in less than twenty minutes, but they found the place less gay than they had expected. It was pleasant, however, to sit around the great stone fireplace in the tap room and watch the bright flames lick their way up the chimney while more mixtures of hot Scotch were brewed and drunk.

Some remark about a woman by MacTavish reminded Carey of Myra. He had never taken any of his friends with him to see her, but now this appeared an excellent thing to do. He considered telephoning at first, but he felt fairly certain he would find her at home.

"Come on, you fellows," he said, jumping to his feet, "I've got an idea! We'll leave this place and go to another where we'll have a much better time!"

They accepted his leadership cheerfully and got into their great coats again with much boisterous struggling. Carey whirled them through Harlem, down Broadway, back into town. He loved these mad dashes; they thrilled him as nothing else he did; constantly he played a reckless game with policemen at crossings and on motor cycles. If he evaded them, slipped by, escaping their vigilance, he won the game; if he failed, they won, and arrest might follow. Recklessness, daring and luck, all had favoured him, and within the city limits he had only once been arrested. To-day it was especially exciting, for the promised snow had begun to fall, the streets were wet and slippery, and the car skidded treacherously. The narrower the margin by which an accident was averted, the more thrilling it became.

It was ten minutes before six when Carey stopped in

front of Myra's house. Lotta, the capped-and-aproned coloured maid, let them in, and Carey was delighted to learn that Myra was at home. The two physicians passed into the tiny, dainty reception room, and Carey ran down the hall to Myra's own room.

He found her reclining in an upholstered arm-chair, her beslippered feet propped upon the bed, while, over the back of the chair, her lovely hair was spread, like a mermaid's floating in the water. Lotta had been brushing it while Myra turned rapidly the pages of a notorious novel. She greeted Carey more affectionately than usual.

"Hello, kiddo," she said, "I'm glad you've turned up at last. I was beginning to be afraid you'd thrown me down. It's been more 'n a week since you've been here."

"Do you want to go on a party, Myra?" Carey said eagerly, sitting down on the arm of her chair.

"Careful, Carey," Myra protested, pushing him gently away. "Lotta's got that all nicely brushed!" She regarded him a moment with a new thought in her mind.

"How much 've you been drinking?"

"Drinking!" Carey answered, pettishly. "What are you talking about? I've had about *two* drinks!"

She continued to study him a moment, and then, as if satisfied that he was speaking the truth, she asked:

"What kind of a party?"

"Oh, I don't know," Carey answered vaguely. "I've brought a couple of friends along, and I thought you might be able to scare up two girls, and we'd all go to dinner some place."

Myra's eyes widened.

"That sounds good to me. Cora rang up this afternoon and asked me what was doing to-night. She wanted me to go to a 'sacred concert.'"

Myra's silvery laugh rang out musically.

"There's Cora's sister—but she's got a beau." She reflected a moment, and then clapped her hands together joyfully.

"Mary! Mary Brown! The very girl. Oh—o—o!" Myra laughed again. "She's lots of fun!"

"She doesn't sound very interesting," Carey said, dubiously.

Myra rolled her eyes and made a little "o" of a mouth.

"Wait till you get her started, once!" she warned him. "You're a duck, Carey,—I love parties like this, and I've been awfully lonely to-day. Are your friends amusing?"

Carey carried the story of the contemplated party to MacTavish and Floherty while Myra telephoned to the two girls and dressed. The three of them were in a hilarious mood—Carey had found the ingredients for some cocktails in the sideboard in the dining room—when Myra's friends arrived. They rode up in a taxi and presently Carey was mixing cocktails for all six of them, while they argued about where they should go to dine.

Myra's friends were all that Carey hoped for or could expect. One of them, Mary Brown, was very dainty and prettily made, exquisitely dressed in a vivid green silk, fur-trimmed, gold embroidered street suit; she wore her very rich auburn hair in the "turban swirl" that was then an advanced fashion. Cora was rather tall and willowy, with dark eyes in soft shadows, a nose a trifle *retroussé*, and a warm, fine skin, olive-hued and almost transparent. She wore a three-piece tailor suit of a wonderful *taupe* shade, the lines of which were long and graceful, strikingly setting off her splendid figure. But Myra, in black velvet and white furs, with a broad Gainsborough hat trimmed in the same fur, was more

beautiful and even more fashionably gowned than the others in their more elaborate costumes. Carey thought he had never seen three such superb women.

Myra insisted that she was ravenous, and declined to waste so sharp an appetite on anything but the most carefully prepared and seasoned food. It was this that decided them in favour of the old *Martin's* on Ninth Street. All agreed that no such cooking was to be had elsewhere in the city. While the party were putting on their coats and wraps, Carey telephoned for a table.

It was a biting cold night. Underfoot, on window copings, roofs and ledges, wherever a surface presented itself, the heavy snow gathered. As Carey drove the car along the broad roadways in the Park, he could hardly see before him. The flying particles of snow were swiftly swept into his eyes which he was forced to keep painfully squinted; the wet flakes quickly gathering on the glass of the wind-shield had already rendered it opaque. Myra, in a great furry bear skin, cuddled close against his arm, while the others in the tonneau laughed and screamed in exaggerated mirth. As they skirted the Mall, the double row of arc lights on either side cast toward them a dull, steady radiance like the reflection of bull's-eye lanterns through frosted window glass. Fifth Avenue was deserted, a long, vacant lane, its white vista broken here and there by a solitary taxi-cab or a hurrying, bundled figure. An occasional bar of light beneath a half-drawn window curtain would give evidence of cheer and occupancy within the tall, forbidding mansions that flanked the upper part of the street. Lower down, hotels and clubs were brightly lighted, and before the churches, the sextons, armed with brooms, were sweeping away the snow from steps and walks.

As Carey swung the car into Ninth Street, he was sud-

denly obliged to put all his strength into his emergency brake and his full weight upon the foot-brake. A man had started to make the crossing, just as Carey's powerful headlights flashed upon him when the car began to turn. In his haste to regain the sidewalk, the pedestrian's foot slipped and he sprawled helplessly on the snow-covered pavement. Fortunately, because of the number of people he carried, Carey had slowed down. The heavy car, its wheels arrested in an iron grip, skidded violently on the slippery surface of the street, swung completely around, and brought up sharply against the curbing with an ominous crack. The group in back was flung roughly against the inside of the tonneau; one of the girls screamed. Carey, glancing angrily at the cause of the mishap, who still squatted upon his knees on the sidewalk, killed his engine and, squirming out from behind the steering wheel, swung himself over the side of the car and leaped to the street. The damage, as far as he could determine, was not as serious as he feared. Two of the spokes on the rear wheel were split, but the fractures were not bad enough to prevent them proceeding at once. He rose to his feet, reassuring the others. There was a general laugh of relief.

"Pretty lucky!"

"Oh, my ribs! I thought I was a goner!"

"Cora, you mashed me . . ."

"That was a narrow squeak."

"It's a good thing you slowed up."

"Why, we might all 've been killed!"

"Kiss me quick, somebody! I'm awful lucky."

A shrill clamour broke out from all of them. Carey cranked his engine and struggled back into his seat. Slowly he released his clutch, and the great car jerked and

rolled out into the Avenue, Carey swinging it with difficulty into Ninth Street.

"That's the satisfaction of having a good car," he said to Myra. "A cheap, American make would have been smashed to kindling wood."

Floherly leaned over to him from the back seat.

"Do you know who that was? Who that man was you nearly ran over?"

"Ran over?" Carey protested. "I saved his life, and it will cost me a couple of hundred dollars!"

"That was old Blanchard," Floherly said, disregarding Carey's digression. "You know, Anna's father, whom we knew at the Fillmore's."

"I wish I'd given him a bump," Carey answered, bringing the car to a standstill in front of the café. "I would have, if I had known who he was," he added. "He always *was* in the way."

They got out of the motor and trooped up the stairs into the brightly lighted foyer. A rush of appetising odours met them, the rich smell of roasting meats, the savoury fragrance of rare culinary combinations, the inviting aroma of French cooking. Myra clapped her hands, and, in the entrance hall way, pulled Carey's head down and suddenly kissed him. It was little more than a swift touch, like a child's kiss, yet it sent the blood rushing into Carey's face. It was such evidence of Myra's capricious affection that made her seem to him infinitely charming, infinitely dear.

He was in gay spirits as he led the way to the round table at one side that had been reserved. The party's entrance created the stir among the other diners he had come to find so agreeable. There was not a person in the room who did not follow with his eyes their progress to their table.

Carey ordered elaborately, starting off with a choice collection of *hors d'œuvres* and selecting an old vintage of champagne to be properly chilled. A double order of cocktails was served. This stimulant on top of the hot Scotches and the drinks he had imbibed during the afternoon produced the feeling of excitement and hilarity he so keenly craved. MacTavish gave evidence of being already slightly drunk; he was leaning conspicuously over Cora's shoulder, murmuring in her ear, while the girl laughed shrilly, telling him audibly to behave.

A report, the breaking of a window glass, a concussion that shocked him violently, brought Carey, half staggering, to his feet, a wild feeling of alarm possessing him. Other men had risen; Myra began to scream, catching his arm, sinking to her knees upon the floor beside him. There was a rush of human voices, the clatter of broken crockery, a sudden swift movement upon the part of the standing figures. In bewilderment Carey gazed about, trying to understand what had happened.

Simultaneously with the second shot, he caught sight of the malignant face and the aimed revolver through the glass partition of the café. In that brief moment he remembered the side entrance, the short flight of stairs from the street, the glass door, opening directly into the restaurant, that was never used. A roar of noise assailed him, the shouts of the men drowning the shrill bleating of the women. Some one bumped roughly against him, knocking him back into his chair.

It was Blanchard's fourth shot that was most effective. Carey felt it strike him. A sudden, utter weakness overcame him; his head fell forward among the dishes and glassware upon the table.

Noise—noise—noise. Round him whirled red and black chaos. There were blinding lights and warm,

sticky blood; there was blood all over him. Then came pain, swift, sharp, piercing. Some one was troubling him; he was being moved; they were torturing him. Quick, hurting fingers played upon him, twisting, pressing, pulling. Once he cried out. Blood filled his throat, all but strangling him. A cough racked his body. Then there was darkness for what seemed a long time. Through the blackness that surrounded and weighed him down, continually he heard a querulous old voice, brokenly accusing him:

"He's a practised seducer! He's a menace to Society! He ruined my daughter."

There were more lights and more voices. A deafening roar of hideous noise. Then they lifted him. The sound of the shifting, struggling feet, the warning, authoritative voice giving directions reached his dimming consciousness. A violent pain up along his back and neck gripped him.

Swiftly the darkness rushed down upon him again.

PART THREE

PART THREE

CHAPTER I

THE hot sunshine poured in through the high hospital window and flung a brilliant parallelogram of light upon one corner of the trimly drawn white sheet that covered his bed. Sister Claudia, in flowing black robes, was arranging the sterilised instruments, the pus basins, the gauze sponges, the roll of absorbent cotton and bandages for the doctor's visit at eleven. Carey shut his eyes wearily. The bed sores upon his right hip and knee pained him acutely. In the room adjoining, a plaintive child's voice called incessantly:

"Alice! Alice! Alice!"

He had listened to that pathetic wail all night.

"How is he to-day, Sister?" he asked.

"He's better, I believe. The delirium won't last."

"Who is Alice?"

"His favourite sister. She's been beside him since yesterday morning. He doesn't recognise her."

Carey's neighbour was a little boy of eight years, who had been brought to St. Vincent's two days ago, suddenly afflicted with tetanus poisoning.

Carey fell to counting the repetitions of the small sufferer's cry. During the night, he had counted as many as

two hundred and eighty. Long after he had desisted, the plaint continued regularly, at intervals, like the ticking of a clock.

"Alice! Alice! Alice!"

Doctor Emerson opened the door briskly.

"Well, young man," he said cheerily, "how are we to-day?"

He slipped out of his coat, plunged his hands into a basin of warm water Sister Claudia had arranged for him, and began to scrub them vigorously. A young interne, a new comer at the hospital, in a white sterilised gown, followed him, working upon his hands a pair of dripping rubber gloves. The nurse withdrew.

Carey winced and shut his teeth as the Doctor flung back the bed clothes and deftly removed the coarse, rough hospital night gown, slit up the back, that he was obliged to wear. He was familiar to the last twinge with the dreary routine of pain before him. For ten weeks he had received this daily visit, experienced this daily torture.

The Doctor examined the draining tubes in the fleshy part of his arm, squeezing the slits from which they protruded forcibly. A groan, that sounded more like a sharp grunt through shut teeth and lips, followed by a quick intake of breath, escaped Carey with each vigorous pinch. The physician had long passed that state in their relationship when there was any necessity for meaningless expressions of sympathy. They had grown to like and thoroughly understand one another.

Dr. Emerson murmured something to the interne.

"I'm going to take these out, my boy," he continued, addressing his patient. Carey noticed that the Doctor always raised his voice when he spoke to him, as one

might to a deaf person. "And I congratulate you on escaping a very dirty case of infection. Three weeks ago, I was almost certain I should have to amputate."

He turned to his assistant.

"In twenty-five years' experience, I have never seen so aggravated a case. The bullet travelled the length of the arm, entering just above the wrist. The humerus and the ulna were both shattered; splinters of bone were driven all through the muscular tissues. Eight days after the arm was set, there were evidences of infection. We had a difficult time."

He paused a moment.

"Now, let's look at the shoulder and neck."

With a quick jerk, he stripped the adhesive tapes from Carey's back and chest that held the dressing in place. Carey's whole body twitched violently. The skin from which the adhesions were removed was raw and bleeding.

"You'll have to rig up some other kind of bandage, Cudworth," the physician said to the interne. "The skin here won't stand the tape any more."

He bent over the gaping wound.

"You see," he continued, still speaking to his assistant, "there's where we had to probe. The bullet was deeper than we expected. The collarbone was fractured, the bone curiously splitting the bullet, and we found a jagged piece of the lead buried over here. The X-ray was not clear, and I had to open up, fearing infection. . . . I can't understand why those edges won't knit. That flesh looks perfectly healthy!"

He prodded Carey with his finger tips.

"No suppuration here! It's curious, Cudworth, what you run across in surgery: the unexpected always presents itself. Now, see here; the more dangerous perforation was through the right lung, and yet that gave

us no trouble at all; there was no infection. You see how cleanly it has healed." He placed his finger midway down on Carey's back.

The interne leaned forward interestedly.

". . . But this wound in the neck is annoying."

Emerson paused. Carey heard him rubbing the stiff stubble of beard upon his chin.

"Get me a hypodermic and cocaine," he said, decisively. The interne stripped off the rubber gloves and left the room.

Carey looked up at the Doctor apprehensively.

"What are you going to do?"

"Trim you up a bit." Emerson smiled encouragingly. Carey shuddered and sank his head into the hot pillow.

He kept his eyes closed while there prevailed about him a faint murmur of preparation. A bit of cotton saturated in alcohol was rubbed gently along the surface of the skin surrounding the wound in his neck, and then came the quick, biting thrust of the hypodermic needle. Again and again the needle was thrust home, but, after the third or fourth incision, he experienced no sensation.

Determinedly he kept his eyes closed, reassuring himself that the cocaine would neutralise further pain. The surgeon and his assistant puttered with sterilised instruments, gauze sponges and basins.

Suddenly a scream of agony burst from between Carey's tightly shut lips. Emerson, with a pair of surgical scissors, had begun to trim the edges of the wound, with as calm deliberation as he might have enlarged a hole in a sheet of newspaper. To Carey it was merciless, outrageously cruel. The shears seemed gigantic, its blades enormous. The cocaine had no effect at all! Ten weeks of pain and fever had robbed him of any power of control. Incoherently he sobbed aloud his entreaties to the Doctor.

Snip, snip went the scissors. Carey could feel the blood running down his shoulder and back, and could feel the pressure of the small, pickle-shaped basin as the interne held it firmly against his side to catch the flow.

Snip! Snip!

"There, my boy, I guess that hurt a little," Emerson said kindly, patting Carey's head. "We'll have you about again, now, in short order. You're doing nicely. You've got both your arms still and two sound lungs; you've no kick coming."

Carey lay sobbing, his face buried deep in the pillow wet with saliva and tears. Deftly Emerson bandaged him, comfortably, snugly. Slowly, by unappreciable degrees, the agony of the pain receded.

The surgeon left; the interne followed; Sister Claudia's gentle hand smoothed his hair and presently she brought him some chicken broth, which she knew he liked. But he could not touch it. He still quivered with the agony he had endured; he was too weak to make any effort to regain his self-control. His body had been outraged by pain. He was no more than a quivering organism.

Day followed day; night followed night; week followed week. Daily the wound was dressed, daily he endured the pain of that operation. An unending succession of unrelated events carried him, dully, listlessly, from hour to hour. After the fever was checked, there had been a time when Carey began to anticipate the pleasure of being well again. Long ago this had passed. He was beaten down, down, down, until he was bereft of any wish beyond the desire not to be hurt. Even the food he was permitted to eat lost its interest. He became an animal in whom all emotion, all wants, all instincts were dead, except this one dominating fear. Constantly the

bed sores galled him. He could lie either upon his left side or flat upon his back. These were the only positions he might assume. The inflated rubber rings Sister Claudia was forever adjusting beneath his hip and knee, while they relieved the immediate pressure of his weight, were hot and uncomfortable. They could be endured for only a short time.

Doctor Floherty dropped in to visit him every two or three days. At first he had come every day; but Carey was very ill then, with a mounting fever, delirious at times, insensible to everything about him. As consciousness returned, something, vaguely connected in his mind with Doctor Floherty, made his visits irritating and unwelcome. There had been an exhausting interview with a man from the Police Department soon after he came to the hospital. This individual kept asking him questions, repeating the same inquiry over and over, while a tall, black, thin person wrote down in a book whatever he answered. Then followed the period of the fever,—a long succession of whirling flights, unexpected surging sensations and dizzying downward dips, like experiences on a scenic railway. There had come a night when, with wide staring eyes, the vapour that befogged his mind cleared, and he saw Sister Claudia sprinkling drops of water from her finger tips upon the bed. As he gazed at her, she caught his eye and, recognising the saneness that was there, came and sat by his pillow, smoothing back his hair with her tender, rough-skinned hand. She bent over him.

"Carey," she asked, "are you a Catholic? Can you hear me?"

Carey regarded her fixedly.

"Am I going to die, Sister?" he whispered. A comforting feeling of resignation filled his heart. It wouldn't

be bad to die. Death was a friendly thing; it would be welcome rather than otherwise. There would be a few, possibly, who would feel sorry to hear about it.

"We are all in God's hands, whatever is His will. He may take you to His peace and to His home. . . ."

That was it,—peace; that was what he wanted,—peace. To be free from the body that held him, bound him, encased him!

At that time there had been no pain. It was only after the fever burnt itself out that he began to suffer. The time came when he wished with all the strength of his racked and wasted body that he had died that night. There followed a period when he ceased to protest, when he lay doggedly enduring his suffering. He prayed only to be let alone, to be tortured no more.

Recollections of his life, his work, his friends, Myra, Springer, Jerry Hart, were wiped from his mind as cleanly as a child sponges a slate. It was Floherty's solicitous face at the door, at the bedside, bending over him, that vaguely suggested them to him, troublesomely, unpleasantly. He shrank from the irksome task of remembering again; he dreaded what might happen when the past was recalled.

The weather grew hot, the room stifling, the summer shut down relentlessly upon a sweltering city. Carey, stretched flat upon his back, felt the drops of perspiration that formed upon his chest trickle down the sides of his body. Sister Claudia laid ice compresses on his head, and sat beside him fanning his burning face for long intervals.

It was during a blistering morning that predicted an afternoon of intense discomfort that Sister Paul, who was in charge of St. Jerome's hall, entered Carey's room

and took his hand affectionately between her two cool, capable ones.

"Want to see any friends?" she asked, her eyes twinkling through their half-shut lids. Her expression was always one of amused interest. She appeared to read human nature as clearly as a printed page.

Carey's answer was a slow contraction of the brows. Sister Paul patted his hand reassuringly.

"I know, I know," she said. "I've turned them away before,—all of them. Doctor Emerson gave orders you were to see no one, but that was when you first came, in March. He was speaking to me about you yesterday; he doesn't like your listlessness, the way you're inclined to lie here, day by day, and make no effort to rouse yourself. You're getting well; the wound in your neck is healing slowly but satisfactorily; you would soon cure the bed sores if you sat up awhile. Now I'm going to let your friend come up and see you, just for a few minutes. He's been here every day for nearly a month."

Carey shut his eyes in resignation. He was too unutterably weak to combat this strong, determined woman. He didn't care if she admitted a regiment of people. Presently there was a careful knock at the door, and Carey opened his eyes to see the old, familiar features of Joe Downer.

His first sensation was a feeling of intense annoyance. But, as he turned his head in irritation toward the wall, instinctively he stretched out a long, bony hand toward his old friend. Neither spoke. Joe sat down beside the bed, took Carey's hand in his, and so they remained for several minutes. Carey resolutely kept his head turned away. Here at last was come what he had unconsciously been fearing: the meddling outside world; now was the time when disagreeable and distressing

things once more must be faced and decided. He felt himself too helplessly weak and exhausted to meet the ordeal.

Tears dropping upon his hand presently apprised him that Joe was crying. He had never seen Joe cry; the idea distressed him. He turned to look at him. His friend had covered his eyes with one hand while he clung to Carey's with the other.

"What the hell, Joe!" Carey's exclamation was little more than a whisper. Joe's head sank lower. Carey pressed his hand. Dimly he began to realise that only the most poignant emotion could move Joe like this.

"What's the matter, Joe?" he demanded, perplexed.

"You look . . ."

Swiftly Joe reached for his handkerchief, loosening Carey's hand. Carey raised it to his own face, wondering and troubled. Not until the moment of contact did he realise that the hair upon his face had grown into a long, ragged, yellow beard. Subconsciously he saw his face, gaunt, white and haggard, the tangled growth surrounding it like yellow seaweed.

"I haven't seen you, Carey, for nearly two months," Joe said brokenly.

"Two months!" Carey repeated, still feeling annoyed and puzzled.

"They let me come once or twice while you were a bit out of your head; then I had to go home again for a few days."

It was too perplexing. Carey shut his tired eyes. He felt he ought to ask Joe how his mother was, although he was entirely aware she was dead.

There was a welcome interruption; Sister Claudia re-entered the room, and Joe rose to go, pressing Carey's limp and unresponsive hand as he said good-bye.

"I can come to-morrow, Sister?" Carey heard him asking.

"You'll have to speak to Sister Paul," she replied sweetly.

Carey devoutly hoped permission would be refused.

Slowly Carey's inert brain was stimulated back into activity. It was a long, tiring process, carefully to be gauged and checked by Sister Paul's vigilant supervision. At times, when the spur of suggestion urged his returning consciousness too sharply, he would be left to himself for two or three days. At others, Joe would sit silently beside him, briefly answering his infrequent questions.

Doctor Floherty came to see him, but his visits were brief; he rarely stayed long enough to sit down. Carey, however, found the opportunity to thank him for his effective care on the night of the shooting. He wondered what would have become of him if it had not been for the doctor's presence and his capable management of the situation. From him he learned that old Blanchard was in the Tombs, and his trial for attempted murder would be postponed until Carey was quite well again.

One day they put into his hands half a dozen of the letters that had accumulated during his illness. Envelopes bearing in their upper left-hand corner the imprint of business concerns had been carefully sifted out. They allowed him to read those only of a personal, friendly character. Among these he found one from Jane Boardman. It was a simple, unaffected note of sympathy. She had read the account of the shooting in the papers and had learned that Carey had been taken to St. Vincent's Hospital. In response to her telephoned inquiries, she had been told he had a good chance for

recovery, and she hoped the few flowers she was sending would help cheer his convalescence. She remained ever sincerely his friend, Jane Boardman. The note was dated late in March; it was the middle of July when Carey was able to read it.

It was this brief letter on its diminutive-sized note paper that did more to rend the curtain of fog that obliterated the past from Carey's recollection than any stimulation that either Joe or Sister Paul had so far dared to try. He thrust it beneath his pillow and asked Sister Claudia to bring the rest of his mail. A great many letters had arrived, she explained, but Mr. Downer had these in keeping. On the following day, when Joe paid his customary visit, Carey demanded them from him. Most of them Downer had opened and answered. There were only a few that were not of a business nature. Springer, and even Cecilia, had written several times; both had called at the hospital, but had not been permitted to see him. Old Mrs. Harrison, who had attended his mother during her last illness, had written him; but that was all. There was not a line nor a message from Myra, nor from any one else.

Fragment by fragment he pieced his life together. As his vision cleared and memory returned, the picture he came gradually to view was not a pleasant one. Perhaps it was just as well that the process by which his mind was able to recall the past was a slow one. As Sister Claudia sat in her chair by the window reading serenely from her little prayer book, she was often startled by hearing Carey suddenly groan aloud. Always she rose and bent over him, brushing his long hair from his eyes.

"Pain?" she would ask solicitously.

"Pain of mind," Carey would answer brokenly.

Like the swinging of a pendulum, Carey's disorganised brain carried him from one extreme to another. One day, Father Bulotti, from the Church of St. Francis Xavier, came to see him. Sister Claudia suggested the visit, and Carey welcomed the idea. Blunderingly, haltingly, Carey made a full confession of his sins to the grey-haired Jesuit. A more clever priest would have swung Carey to Catholicism. Father Bulotti would promise absolution only upon a profession of faith. Carey's soul cried out for sympathy; he was in no condition to wrestle with dogmas or to join in arguments by which Father Bulotti assured him his religious doubts would be cleared away. With the priest's departure, Carey lapsed into melancholia. All day he would lie staring vacantly upward, writhing in spirit, as some recollection of his old life came back to him. Over and over the same ground his mind travelled, accepting, with a slowly shaking head and shut lips at each painful memory, additional evidence that confirmed the picture of his life of debased profligacy.

Soon after Joe's coming, he had dully agreed to his friend's suggestion and a day or two later signed a power-of-attorney by which Joe was empowered to pay his debts and straighten out his affairs. After his mind began to clear, relief came in a welcoming rush when he discovered that this had been done and that the tangle of his accounts and his obligations were being properly managed.

He and Joe had many talks. Every afternoon, the latter would arrive and, for an hour or more, sit rocking quietly beside the bed. At first there were long silences between them, Joe waiting patiently for Carey's mind to adjust itself. Gradually their old, intimate relationship returned; there were no reticences, no withheld confi-

dences, no secrets. Perhaps never in their lives were they so close to one another.

It was the tenth of August when Carey, with Joe's arm about him, slowly went down the stone steps of the hospital and climbed into the waiting taxi-cab. As they drove through the streets, Carey gazed out into the brilliant sunshine and beheld, as it were, a different world. It was as if some one had snatched away the coloured glass through which he had looked, before that day when he was carried upon a stretcher into St. Vincent's Hospital. Everything appeared new and strange to him; everything seemed dazzling and bright. Most of all was he interested in the strong delineation of the faces of the people he saw passing rapidly by in the street. Each expressed the effect of emotions, like the surface of a rock that is changed by dropping water. It struck him as curious that they should all have eyes and noses and mouths. The human physiognomy was, after all, a hideous thing, with its organs functioning where all might see. There was no modesty in it. The human face was illy devised.

Each of the people he gazed out upon was hurrying by, intent to fulfil a purpose, a petty, trivial purpose, which, after all, mattered so little. They all appeared ridiculous to him, running about like aimless bugs. He had touched Death's finger tips across the threshold of Life. One glimpse of that stern, grim visage had swept the cobwebs, the murk and dirt from before his eyes, and he was able to *see* now, while the poor fools he watched from the cab's window ran about in blind circles. The buildings by which he once had been thrilled, that had impressed him when first he came to the city as evidences of achievement, of romance, of power,—now were excrescences, the puny monuments of pigmy creatures that could be swept

away in the winking of an eye by one manifestation of Nature.

There was no monster here, to be feared and dreaded and conquered. Where was that which had filled his heart and brain with terror the day he stood on the Christopher Street ferry so long ago, and watched lying flat and crouching, a twinkle with a myriad of lights? There was no such thing. It existed only in his fancy, a figment of his brain. He had come face to face with a more terrifying monster, had been on intimate terms with him for a long time, and, terrifying though he might be, Carey had felt no fear or distrust.

The taxi slowed down and stopped in front of the Fifty-ninth Street studio. Trembling from the weakness the exertion cost him, Carey got out and slowly made his way upon Joe's arm to the elevator within, that shot him up to his own floor. Naka opened the door, smiling, sucking his breath in through his teeth, bowing energetically.

Carey gazed about. The spectre of his old life rose up before him, greeting him mockingly. The subtle perfume that Myra affected seemed still to hang in the air. It nauseated him. He turned to Joe, shuddering.

"Not here—not here, Joe," he muttered.

Upstairs, Naka swiftly stripped off his bagging, unfamiliar clothes, and presently he sank luxuriously into the bed he had not known for five months.

The period of readjustment, the time it took before his full strength returned, was longer than he anticipated. Every other day he was obliged to report to Doctor Emerson's office for a fresh dressing. The wound in his shoulder was slowly healing, but there would always be a depression, the size of an egg, where it had been. He

was weak and listless; his strength coquetted with him like a flirting school girl. The weather was warm, and the radiance of the sunshine upon his back was gratifying and pleasant. Carey liked to walk out in the Park with Joe, and sit in some sunny spot and watch the stream of nurse maids and carriages, the fretting babies, the scampering, clamorous children, pass by. His customary figure, his pleasant, friendly smile, became a familiar sight. Several of the children made friends with him; even some of the nurse maids favoured him with a respectful "Good day, sir."

Springer came to see him one morning. Carey had written a feeble note, as soon as he was able, and Springer had responded immediately by taking an early train for the city the following morning. Carey could see the effect of his own changed face and wasted figure in his eyes. He felt that he had indeed changed, both inside and out. His long period of suffering had left its mark upon him; he looked older; the bloom of youth, that had lingered with him, was gone forever.

Springer was full of news, of explanations for what, he feared, had seemed neglect, of affectionate assurances. Repeated calls at the hospital had been invariably met by firm refusals to allow any one to see Carey. Both of them had written. Carey had surely received the letters? Recently he had been excessively busy making five hundred pen-and-ink sketches for a text book, and Celia—well, Celia wasn't well—but, Carey might as well know—there was a baby expected in December! Springer grinned, half sheepishly, half proudly, as he conveyed the news; but to Carey it seemed both splendid and affecting that Springer was to become a father, was to have a child of his own.

Carey must come to live with them in Leonia until he

was strong again. Celia was wild to have him, had made Springer promise not to come back without him. It was pleasant to recognise the note of sincerity and affection in his friend's voice. But Carey shook his head; there was Joe and his frequent visits to the doctor. Perhaps, in two or three weeks, it might be managed. Joe had long overstayed the time of his visit and had recently spoken of going home before his own little business went altogether to pieces; Emerson would discharge him for good after a few more visits. They parted with the understanding that Carey should move over to Leonia on the first of October.

On the eve of Joe's departure, Carey wrote him a cheque for three hundred dollars, plus the four years' interest that had accrued since it was borrowed. He had resolved to let this wait no longer. He cut Joe's protestations short, for he felt his own unforgivable negligence in the matter, his ingratitude, his utter failure to appreciate a devotion so loyal and unselfish. The sum had been borrowed from Joe's meagre savings, upon the clearly understood agreement that it was to be repaid as soon as Carey was upon his feet. He had squandered almost as much during the past year in a single night's entertainment.

Carey bought a fine, solid gold-cased watch and chain and slipped both into Joe's pocket as they stood by the guard, examining tickets, in the noisy station. He was not to open the package until he was in the train.

Perhaps the strongest emotion Carey had ever experienced in a human relationship came to him as he wrung Joe's hand in farewell. At the moment, nothing that had ever come into his life seemed comparable with this fine, strong, loyal devotion. The stress of life, new influences, the various tides that swept them hither and

thither in the sea of their individual experiences, had left it unchanged, supreme, steadfast. Here was friendship, —unselfish, unexacting friendship, demanding no recognition, no reward, no return,—seeking only to serve.

One other resolution that he had made during the long period of his convalescence at the hospital he put into execution immediately after Joe's departure. It was an order for a little stone at the Mt. Kisco Cemetery where his father was buried. He spent the better part of a day there, speculating upon his parents' unfortunate marriage, upon their unsuitableness for one another, and upon himself, his own character and nature that was the result of their union. He wondered what manner of man his father really had been; he would have liked to have talked to him. He was embarrassed and made painfully self-conscious by the glances of a group of women in heavy mourning who watched him as he awkwardly arranged the flowers he had brought with him in the iron, cone-shaped cups at the head and foot of the grave.

The effort of carrying his suitcase at intervals on the journey to Leonia dispelled any illusions Carey might have had about his restored strength. He was trembling, and a fine perspiration broke out upon him as he set the bag down in front of the Springer gate and rested against the high wooden post on which it swung. Springer came hurrying down the brick walk, effusive in his greeting, catching up the offending luggage and taking Carey's arm as they climbed the slight grade toward the house. Presently Carey lay comfortably in a long wicker chair, with pillows at his head and back, while Cecilia sat beside him expressing her solicitude, and Springer fetched a glass of water.

The following weeks were full of delightful relaxa-

tion, pleasant comfort, and the first real happiness Carey had known for a long time. In the morning, it was nine, and sometimes later, before he awoke. The sunlight flooded the room and there was the song of birds just outside the open window. As he leisurely dressed in his brown army shirt and soft flannels, he could hear the tinkle of the Japanese wind-bells that dangled from the roof of the porch and stirred musically with the morning breeze. Always he found a little table, covered with a white cloth and arrayed with sparkling silver and glass-ware, waiting for him by the porch railing, the morning paper neatly folded by his plate. Cecilia invariably met him at the open front door, a steaming coffee-pot in one hand, a plate of buttered toast in the other. Never were breakfasts more thoroughly enjoyed, never was coffee more deliciously made. It was pleasant to sit idly reading the morning news, smoking cigarettes that were now beginning to be enjoyed again, and feel the reviving sun, while the wind-bells overhead maintained their faint tinkle, and Cecilia's slow-moving, ample figure passed in and out of the house, setting it to rights, telephoning her orders for the day to the grocer and butcher. There was always a pleasant hour before luncheon when she brought her sewing out and sat beside him, talked of herself and Springer and their plans. Carey thoroughly enjoyed these moments, nor did he ever find her simple narratives and comments lacking in interest. She seemed to him to have grown into a beautiful woman; the rotundity of her face and figure became her; it was the flowering of the rose: benign, gracious, charming. Particularly did her charm appeal to him when, with a slightly heightened colour, she held up for his inspection the tiny flannel garment she was busy feather-stitching.

From the lower end of the garden, where the studio

was situated, Springer's voice, ringing out some idle, happy song, occasionally reached them. Carey was moved at such moments with some curious pang, some poignant regret or longing that he could not understand.

In the afternoon, the three always went for a long walk, kicking before them the leaves that had begun to fall and were thick upon their path. In front of certain homes which strung themselves along the roadway the tumbled dead foliage had been raked into great piles; some of these were on fire, a gardener and a boy or two watching the conflagration. Veils of smoke drifted in and out among the trees, leisurely, gracefully, vagrantly. The air was heavy with pungent fragrance. There was a quaint tea house nearly two miles along the road toward Tenaflly, that always provided a pleasant destination. An old couple ran the place, a motherly, wrinkled old woman and her husband, who had once been a sailor. His part in the establishment seemed to be that of landscape architect and tender-of-cows. He herded the two animals they owned to their pasture in the morning, and herded them back to the tiny barn in the evening. Between times he puttered about the place, erecting rustic fences, rustic gates, rustic seats and rustic arbours. He was forever tinkering with saw and hammer. His wife provided the tea and marvellously baked bread and biscuits. Her uninterrupted flow of words was in marked contrast to her life-partner's never broken silence.

Springer, Cecilia and Carey idled here every afternoon for an hour or more. There was a view of the river from the garden, and it was delicious to sprawl on the warm, grassy earth and watch the steamers and tugs and white patches of the sail boats plying up and down so far below.

The walk home was perhaps the most agreeable part of

the daily excursion. Carey was content to listen to the animated talk of the other two. Their absorbing love for one another had lost all the irritation it had once held for him. They included him in it; never once did he feel conscious that he was an interloper; their embraces, the demonstrations of their affection, were always restrained and yet unaffected and natural. A new kind of love for them both germinated in Carey's heart. Invariably, however, he experienced an acute sense of shame whenever he recalled the irritation and annoyance he had felt when Springer had tried to warn him, out of his wider experience, that the time would come when he would bitterly regret the looseness of his life.

After dinner, Cecilia would play to them. Springer generally had a magazine before him and pulled intermittently at his pipe; but Carey was satisfied to listen. She had developed her music and had now a finished technique and a fine expression. Carey felt the difference, although he was unable to explain it. In after years, he never heard the Moonlight Sonata without recalling the mellow radiance of the dimly-lit room, with its two silk-shaded lamps; the half-recumbent form of Springer slowly turning the pages of his magazine, while the lamp above him threw a brilliant high-light upon one side of his broad forehead; the swaying, graceful figure of Cecilia, and the occasional flash of her white hands; while, through the window, came the sustained stridulating of the crickets and frogs, and the warm night air carried the fragrance of all the blended scents of Autumn.

CHAPTER II

OLD BLANCHARD had died. Doctor Floherty brought him the news one morning after Carey's return to the city. There had always been a doubt as to the old man's sanity in the minds of the officials of the Tombs. At times, Floherty had been informed, he railed against Carey as the cause of his daughter's dishonour and as a despoiler of women's virtue; at others he brokenly acknowledged the injustice of his accusation. A severe cold had suddenly developed into pneumonia, a few weeks before, and he had been removed to Bellevue, where he had lingered a fortnight longer. Floherty went to see him, but the old man was too far gone to recognise him.

His death was a great relief to Carey, who had received several intimations that the District Attorney intended to prosecute as soon as he was able to appear. Carey had never felt any sense of injustice when he thought of the old man who had attempted his life. He considered he had deserved some kind of terrible punishment, even though he was not actually responsible for the particular crime of which Anna's father believed him guilty.

He faced his new life delivered from this troublesome complication. He returned to New York with the half-formed resolution that he would go over to Paris for a year. The thought of taking up his old work again was extremely distasteful to him; he had no ambition to con-

tinue to make his pretty-girl heads. He was through with that kind of unworthy and shoddy work. Always he recalled Charles Hanna Simpson's advice and the eloquent motion of his finger across his throat, the night they had met before the bar in *Sherry's* café. It would be better to do that than go back to making heads.

But Carey found that the money he had so easily made, that at one time had appeared as a five-figure credit balance in his cheque book, was gone. Joe had several times broached the subject of his finances to him, but Carey had always stopped him with:

"Please—please, Joe. Don't worry me about it. Do as you think best. There are the two cars; sell 'em both. I shall never want to ride in them again."

Joe had sold them. He informed Carey of the fact one day, and Carey had dully nodded. The only sensation he had had at the time was one of complacent approval. Now, to find himself poor again was rather a satisfaction than otherwise. Joe had cleared off what he owed with what the cars had brought. The balance in the bank would take care of the rent of the Fifty-ninth Street studio for the remainder of the lease,—another two months,—and pay the doctor's and the hospital bill. After that there would be less than two hundred dollars.

Carey closed the Fifty-ninth Street apartment and moved back to his old quarters in The Rembrandt Studios. He couldn't work in the gilded surroundings that reminded him always of his revels and debauches. But it was the ghost of his former self he encountered as he opened the door of his old room, and left and entered the rambling building. He had been happier there than at any other time in his life. Success,—it had seemed worth while then—had come knocking at his door; Springer, gay, fun-loving, rioting Springer, had lived

down the hall. Life was worth living in those days; each morning when he had awakened, he had wondered what new and pleasant thing would come to make his existence brighter, more interesting.

A dull monotony surrounded him now. No one spoke to him; the men and women he met in the halls failed to notice him. The smells of cooking foods that filtered through the various studio doors sickened him; the laughter and high voices within sounded blatant and shrill; musicians at their practising thumped their tin-panny pianos, and the vocalists screamed their arpeggios tirelessly. It was all in harmony with his mood. It irritated him; but he was like a man consumed with fierce hate and anger, who welcomes the onslaught of the wind and rain as he strides in the teeth of a furious storm.

One day, with what samples of his old work he could gather together in his portfolio, he started out once more to make the rounds of the magazine offices and advertising agencies. But his more recent notoriety had eclipsed his previous fame. Men came out of their offices and into the reception room, where he waited, to stare at him. As he sat waiting beside a door that was opened a few inches, he heard a voice say:

"That man, Carey Williams, is outside; you remember the feller who drew so many pretty-girl heads awhile ago and then got shot up for ruining some one's daughter? Every one was crazy about his stuff last winter. He's round here wanting work again. Take a look at him."

The speaker opened the door wide and smiled his professional greeting, ran through the portfolio quickly while the man whom he had addressed presently entered by another door, paused a moment, walked round them, and passed out on the other side.

It did not annoy or embarrass Carey as it once would

have done. He smiled quietly to himself and picked up his portfolio with a murmured "Thank you," as the Art Editor commenced to recite the various reasons why, just at that particular time, it was not possible to give him a story to illustrate.

Grimly, determinedly, he went the rounds. In such places where the story connected with him was not known, or where it failed to be associated with him, he awakened even less interest. The work he showed was rubbed and dirty; it no longer had the appearance of being fresh. Ben Mercy was out, but Sherman received him cordially enough. He referred at once to the affair, inquiring how long he had been laid up in the hospital, and expressing his concern when informed. Carey told him the whole story, told it between innumerable interruptions. When he finished it, he didn't know whether Sherman was convinced or not. He didn't much care. He wanted work, and Sherman knew what he could do. A commission had been promised him two years ago.

There wasn't a manuscript in the office, Sherman told him. He was sorry. He remembered having promised Carey a story; but then his wonderful popularity had come along, and no one wanted any ordinary work from him. Sherman would look round, and, if anything came along that he thought Carey could handle, he surely would send it to him.

"I'd hate to be obliged to go back to making pretty-girl heads again," Carey said, half whimsically, half earnestly. "I hope I've put that kind of rotten work behind me forever."

Sherman stroked his short, grizzled beard.

"Mason Edward Camp kind of broke in on your field, didn't he?" he asked, reflectively.

"Yes," Carey answered, bitterly. "I told him, like a

fool, about the strawboard I used and how I mixed my water colours one night."

"And he must have told everybody else," Sherman said, wagging his head up and down. "They all trailed after him; we had more girls' heads with braided red hair done on strawboard for a while than we could shake a stick at. I guess that was while you were laid up in the hospital. The idea became a drug on the market. Now it's *The Merry Widow* that our fickle town has gone mad about. Since that new opera opened, you find people talking of nothing else. New York seems to be afflicted with one craze after another. I predict we'll have 'Merry Widow hats,' and 'Merry Widow shoes,' and 'Merry Widow clothes,' just as your name graced our apparel so short a time ago. We seem to have caught the 'Merry Widow fever' on the rebound from the 'Carey Williams infection.' We'll be sick to death of this waltz music in three months and ready for some new fad. You ought to think up some new stunt."

"But I'm tired of stunts, Mr. Sherman," Carey said earnestly. "I want to succeed by conscientious work. I foresee I'm going to be handicapped by the false story about that girl, which I can't explain to every one as I have to you."

As he was speaking, little Jane Boardman entered the office and placed some letters on Sherman's desk for his signature. It was evident she had not recognised him, as his back was toward the door. As she laid the mail on Sherman's desk, she raised her eyes and saw him. Carey was unable to return the quick bow before they were lowered. It came over him suddenly, with a pang of regret, that he had never acknowledged the friendly letter she had written him or the flowers he had never seen. She had been one of the few who had thought of

him and had refused to believe the newspaper stories about the betrayal of his would-be murderer's daughter, her old friend, Anna Blanchard. Hastily he tied the strings of his portfolio and, saying good-bye to Sherman, followed Jane out into the hall. But she had disappeared into one of the many rooms on either side of the long corridor. He turned and passed into the outer office, pausing a moment by the telephone operator's desk. It was the same girl who had befriended him the first day he had called there.

"Will you tell Miss Boardman that Mr. Williams would like to speak to her outside here in the waiting room for just a moment?"

He bent toward the operator ingratiatingly.

"Why, certainly."

There was a rattle of plugs and tangled ropes, and presently Carey heard her repeating his message. A moment later the girl herself stood on the threshold of the doorway, her head a little to one side, her hand on the lintel, pausing a moment non-committally, before he addressed her.

Carey stepped forward, holding out his hand. She accepted it with the same reserved manner.

"Do you know I've been out of the hospital just a few days?" Carey spoke impulsively. He didn't wait for her answer. "The note and the flowers you sent me were the nicest things that happened to me, during five months of pain and misery. I was out of my head, delirious for a number of weeks; I never saw your flowers; the note I was only permitted to read three months after it arrived. Every day I intended to write you. . . . But I can't explain here. What time is it now? How much longer will you have to be here? No,—I'll tell you; I'll

wait downstairs for you until you are through. I have much I must talk over with you."

Jane shook her head, holding up her hands protestingly, with an amused smile at his vehemence.

"I'm afraid," she began, "Mr. Sherman will need me for another hour, perhaps longer. I don't think you had better wait."

Carey was aware the telephone operator was listening. He glanced resentfully at her back. Jane followed his eyes and he caught her smiling. With a quick motion toward the street and an emphatic nod of his head, he held out his hand again.

"I'm sorry," he said. "Some other time, then. Good-night."

He opened the swing gate behind him, turning to catch her eye again. With uplifted brows, he telegraphed his interrogation, pausing an instant for her answer. But a sweet, pleasant smile and a conventional nod of the head, which might have meant anything, were all she vouchsafed. Nevertheless, he decided to wait.

It was nearly six o'clock when he saw her leave the elevator inside the brilliantly-lit foyer of the big office building and make her way with other girls toward the street entrance. He watched her turn down town and, after she had walked half a block, he caught up with her.

"Miss Boardman!"

She turned toward him, surprised and a little reproachful.

"You shouldn't have waited."

"That girl—the operator—was listening to what we said. I really must have a chance to talk with you."

"The street is hardly the place," she answered precisely; but Carey thought he caught a tone of relenting in her voice.

"Well, may I call . . ." he began tentatively.

"I—I don't know," she faltered. "What is it?"

They fell into step together, both a trifle embarrassed. Carey tried to tell her again of his appreciation of her note and flowers. He was conscious that he was expressing himself clumsily and that he hesitated awkwardly as he strove for the right words.

"I heard you were dying," she interrupted.

"I came near it several times."

He began to explain how sick he had been, but it seemed to him too obvious an appeal for her sympathy. He stopped in confusion.

They had reached Union Square. Across its broad, leafless area, the mighty army of home-goers poured, a human river, hurrying toward its south-easterly end, where the subway entrances were located and where stood the gate to that seething, congested district beyond, the Ghetto. It was like some gigantic grain hopper, with the individual kernels bobbing and skipping about, but all being sucked into the yawning mouth of the funnel at the other end. Not one escaped. The river flowed on unbrokenly, undeviatingly. It was like the flight of a people, the rout of an army.

Carey and Jane stood watching the spectacle silently for some minutes; then the girl turned to him, with hand outstretched.

"This is my street," she said. "I live just a few doors beyond Third Avenue. Good-night."

"But I'm going to see you as far as the door," Carey protested.

"It's not necessary," she pleaded.

"But I want to."

He walked beside her as she turned down Fifteenth

Street, and presently they stopped in front of a rather dingy but brightly lit apartment house.

Carey held her hand a moment at the entrance.

"May I come to see you?"

"If you like." Her serious face, suddenly illumined by her smile, seemed, so Carey thought, both beautiful and appealing.

"To-morrow night?"

"To-morrow?" She echoed his question, gazing upward thoughtfully, the smile still playing about the corners of her mouth. "To-morrow," she repeated, "is Friday. Yes,—I will be home."

She turned swiftly and stepped inside.

Through the glass door, Carey caught sight of a large, heavily-shawled woman and the straw hood of a perambulator. He saw Jane speak to the woman and bend over the baby carriage. Then abruptly she disappeared.

Carey laid in a supply of drawing materials the following morning and began seriously to work again. Walking back to the studio after leaving Jane Boardman at her door, he decided that the time had come to begin the reconstruction of his life. In another month he would be twenty-seven; he was still young, and he felt confident that hard work and right living would soon eliminate the effect of the year or so of recklessness. He said this a dozen times a day, to reassure himself that it could be done. The thought most encouraging to him, that gave him strength and confidence, that placed the hope in his heart that it was possible for him to succeed in this determination, if he but tried hard enough, was the memory of the six months at home when he had steadfastly remained by his mother's bedside, faithful to that duty to the last. Six months was not so very long

a time, perhaps, but, to an eager boy as young as he was then, it had been a test. At any rate, it was the only test he had ever been put to in his life by which his will power might be gauged. In addition, there was the satisfying reflection that the old life no longer seemed to possess any fascination for him; he had ceased to crave excitement; fast living, "going the pace" contained no lure for him; the thought of Myra, memories they must always share together, revolted him.

Carey was a little at a loss to understand just what was the reason for this change he found in himself. Reflecting upon the matter, he decided that his long period of pain and suffering had actually purged his soul, ruthlessly uprooting the evil within him. Now his natural cleanliness of nature asserted itself. He was again as he had been as a boy of ten, when he turned, offended and sickened, from the corruption of his school companions.

If he could but remain so! Could retain the memory of Death's aspect, with which he had grown so familiar! If he could but remember always the way he had felt when, with Death standing waiting for him, the things of Life, human hopes and aspirations and preferences and fears, had seemed so insignificant and of such small account!

He refused to delude himself by putting too much faith in this distaste for sin. He recognised his own weakness; he knew the stealthy effect of the hand of Time, and its easy manipulation of memories. Firmly, constantly, he told himself he would hold before him this determination to live decently and cleanly.

But Carey had a harder task before him than he anticipated. He found that it is one thing to live uprightly, carried along on the wave-crest of prosperity; it

is another when the combers of adversity beat relentlessly and persistently upon one's head.

Carey struggled desperately with his Art. Whatever cunning his hand had once possessed seemed to have been dissipated on his pretty-girl heads. It remained for him to win it back. He reached this conclusion toward the close of the first day on which he had begun seriously to work again. He had telephoned for a model, and, for three hours, forced himself to block in her figure in various poses. The smartness, the precision his preliminary sketches had always possessed was gone. His old weakness, the tightening up of his work, he knew he should have to compel himself to correct, after he had won again his old cleverness at laying in the figure.

It was a pleasant thought, after a day of intent application, to remember he was to see Jane Boardman that evening. As he was dressing, adjusting his cravat about his collar, it suddenly occurred to him to ask himself if he was in love with her. He paused a moment, his fingers arrested in their operation. Swiftly his mind shifted to Springer and Cecilia and the supremely happy, contented picture they presented. Jane and himself, somewhere in the country? It was not an unpleasant thought. But, however interesting the idea might appear, he dismissed it. His life was too full, too complicated, he was too intent upon his own regeneration to consider anything so serious as marriage. Besides, he was "broke" now. It would be a long time before he was on his feet again.

Flights of cold concrete steps, a succession of unpainted iron railings, led him on and on, past one floor after another. Apartment twenty-four seemed as inaccessible, with the muscles of his legs aching, as it had

done when he first began to climb. Milk bottles, loaves of bread, stood against the doors of the various apartments. Go-carts or baby buggies cluttered the landings. Many of the doors were opened, disclosing congested interiors, from which came the noise of running water and washing dishes. Young girls and older women were continually passing up and down the steep, narrow staircase, obliging him to step aside and lift his hat as they crowded by. A mingling of varied smells pervaded the entire stair-well.

Apartment twenty-four appeared, as he reached the door bearing that numeral, like the others below. Two clean, empty milk bottles stood in front of the door, but there was no baby carriage.

Jane herself answered his ring. He could see that she was embarrassed at receiving him in her own home; but she was cordial. Carey hung his coat on the pegs of the wooden rack in the dark hall and followed her, past several closed doors, to a lighted room beyond. This was evidently the dining room. A large, square table, covered with a fringed red cloth, stood in its centre, upon which an electric, coloured-glass drop-light threw a brilliant radiance. A linen-covered couch, with a high rolling back, faced a tall walnut cupboard at one end of the room. Between them, two windows, with drawn shades and red rep curtains, were separated by an umbrella plant upon a tall, iron stand, with legs of gilt scroll work.

Near the door, in a wheel chair, his feet wrapped in a camel's hair shawl, sat a large-framed old man, with long, flowing white hair and beard. A contrivance attached to the chair provided him with a table, and upon this were arranged the cards of his solitaire. He gazed intently at Carey, under his thick, white eyebrows, as the caller entered the room.

"My father, Mr. Williams."

Carey stepped forward and took the heavy hand in his; but the old man gave him no word of greeting beyond a nod of his benign white head. A door opened, and a gentle-faced woman entered, whose hair gave the impression of being equally snowy as the patriarch's. But Carey, as he was presented, noticed that it was streaked with pale yellow. She wore it parted in the middle and coiled into a large bun at the back of the neck. Her dress was a stiff watered silk, tarnished and shiny in spots, but there was a touch of lace at the throat. Mrs. Boardman possessed a certain gentle motherliness that warmed Carey's heart at once. She had some letters to write and was going to an early bed. She pressed Carey's hand with quaint graciousness and bade him, in an old-fashioned way, to "make himself at home!"

Carey and Jane sat down on the linen-covered sofa; but, almost at once, their tentative attempt to begin their conversation was interrupted by the entrance of other members of the family. The dining-room, in which they sat, and the adjoining kitchen were, evidently, the only living rooms. The others in the apartment were needed as bedrooms. Two boys, palpably twins, about twelve years old, entered from the kitchen, where they had been studying their lessons, and kissed their father good-night. They still carried their books under their arms. They were black-haired, black-eyed, neat-appearing lads, who resembled Jane both in face and manner.

The last member of the family to be presented to Carey was Jane's older brother, Horace. It was after nine o'clock when he came in from the street, tired and out of breath from the hurried stair-climb. He had a pale complexion and affected sideburns, which made him ap-

pear older than he was. Carey knew that he worked as a compositor with the Methodist Book Concern.

"Over-time again to-night," he said wearily. "It's the fourth night this week!"

Jane suggested a cup of coffee. It would take her but a moment to make it, she urged.

Carey saw the brother's eyes shift in hesitation toward him. It was not difficult to read what was passing in his mind.

"I'd like a cup myself," Carey volunteered, "if you don't mind making it."

Jane jumped up jubilantly, and the three passed into the kitchen. All of them felt freer out of the presence of the taciturn, white-crowned monarch, who tirelessly pursued his silent game of cards.

The kitchen was scrupulously clean. The linoleum-covered floor, the white wood-work, the range, sink, and even the walls, shone from excessive scrubbing. Carey noticed that the usual row of stirring spoons, hand-mops, strainers and egg-beaters, that hung above the sinks in most kitchens, was missing here. There was not even an inverted dishpan beneath the bright nickel faucets of the sink, or a wet dish-cloth drying upon its broad, wooden rim. There was an air of space, of comfort, of neatness about the room.

He could not refrain from commenting upon it.

"We have to use this room so much," Jane said simply, "that mother has to keep things put away. This is the only room we have that gets any sun to speak of, and father spends most of the day in here."

Carey and Horace both sat on the kitchen table, smoking, watching Jane as she produced and filled the coffee-pot, lit the gas stove, sliced bread, and adjusted the wire contrivance over the hissing blue flame for the toast.

Condensed cream, sugar, and a roll of butter made their appearance, and Carey and Horace had to find chairs while the table was being set. Carey marvelled at the girl's speed, her assurance, her deftness. Not once did she make an unnecessary motion.

Presently they were all sitting about the table, drinking what both men pronounced to be perfect coffee, and biting into crisp, hot, buttered toast. It was very pleasant and companionable, and Carey felt that he was enjoying himself hugely.

Horace, a little later, said good-night, and Carey and Jane settled down for a memorable talk.

At once their conversation reverted to Anna, and Jane told him how she had consented to take a small class of boys in St. George's Sunday School, and had first met her there as a fellow teacher.

By some subtle intimation, the girl conveyed to him the fact that she knew of Jerry Hart's part in the circumstances that had culminated in Anna's suicide, and frankly advanced the theory, which had never before occurred to him, that, in her opinion, Jerry had not been wholly to blame. Gossip, implicating Carey as the one responsible for her friend's tragic death, she had always emphatically denied, resenting the outrageous injustice of it. She confessed, rather naïvely, that she had been twitted by her friends for this championship, particularly after he had made his great success. But she had been glad she had taken his part, when the insane old father had shot him down. At the time, she had been greatly excited, for she feared Carey would die, and she would be called in, perhaps, as a witness for the prosecution. When she learned that he had a good chance to recover, she had been so relieved that she sent the note and the flowers.

Once more Carey tried to speak of his appreciation of her thoughtful kindness. He wanted her to understand what her words of sympathy had meant to him, coming as they did at a psychological moment. Unconsciously he found himself telling her of his days of suffering in the hospital. They were still too recent to be described without emotion which the girl saw he had no intention of betraying. An expression of intense feeling, a sympathetic twitching of her face, brought him to an abrupt stop and a hurried apology. He was ashamed to realise how much he had let himself go. Somehow, no one else had seemed to understand what he had endured, not even Joe Downer, who had been with him from day to day.

He rose to go, surprised to find that it was past eleven. In the dining room they found the white-haired giant still intent upon his game. With the same cold dignity, he bowed his magnificent head as Carey said good-night. During the entire evening he had not spoken.

At the door of the apartment, Carey lingered a few moments, loath to terminate the talk that had been so absorbing, searching his mind for some plan to suggest another meeting. His evenings at The Rembrandt Studios were inexpressibly lonely, and he foresaw that many of them might be spent pleasantly in Jane's company.

"Do you suppose your mother would object to letting you go to the theatre with me, some time?" he asked, hesitatingly.

She dropped her serious manner, but the air of coquetry assumed was easily recognisable as a shield for embarrassment. As there was no answer forthcoming, Carey pressed his point.

"How about it? I like better to go on Saturday nights than at any other time of the week. How about tomorrow night? Have you seen *The Merry Widow*?"

She looked at him swiftly, non-committally.

"Then I'll get seats at the *New Amsterdam*," he said decisively. "I'll come for you round seven-thirty; and tell your mother I'll take good care of you. Good-night!"

He held out his hand, smiling happily at the pleasant prospect for the next evening. Jane placed her fingers in his and their hands clung together for a brief moment. A sudden thrill ran through Carey, and he saw a warm flush rising in the girl's cheeks. A swift desire to draw her to him and take her in his arms suddenly possessed him. But, in that instant, she abruptly withdrew her hand and stepped back into the doorway.

"Good-night," she whispered. Then, her face breaking into the smile he found so charming, she added:

"To-morrow . . . at seven-thirty."

There was a last glance and the door shut.

Carey ran happily downstairs.

She was a charming girl. He had never met one so delightfully balanced. She was capable, serious, amusing, beautiful, an excellent office worker, a fine cook, the delight of her family—that was evident—and a staunch, loyal friend.

All the way home—he walked the distance to The Rembrandt Studios, for the night was clear and crisp, a night for rapid walking—he whistled merrily. Life did not present such a dismal prospect after all. If he could catch on with his work again, if he could master his Art once, he might be very happy indeed, chumming about the city with a companion so delightful. He paused in his whistling a moment to smile happily to himself at the possibilities of Coney Island in such company. They would have some jolly excursions together.

A vision of her in her own home rose before him—the humble furnishings and crowded quarters; her grim,

taciturn, crippled father always listening silently to what others might be saying, always in the way; her gentle, quiet, unostentatious mother; her journeyman brother; the missing luxury of cream; the milk bottles at the door, and the smelly, noisy apartment house.

"And not once did she apologise for anything!" Unconsciously he spoke aloud. "The little lady!" he said admiringly.

Carey applied himself with more concentration to his work than he had ever done before. He rose early in the morning and was bending over his drawing board by nine o'clock. At twelve, he cooked himself some eggs over the gas-burner in the kitchenette, brewed a pot of tea, and by one o'clock he was at work again, steadily forcing his hand to go from one operation to another until about four o'clock, when the light began to fade. He was weary then, fagged out both in mind and body, and his couch generally provided a grateful spot for an hour's relaxed sleep.

But his work aggravated him more and more each day. He saw the things in his mind he wanted to draw; but his hand refused to execute them. In a measure, his old ability rapidly to block in a subject returned to him; as he hoped, this came with practice; but now his drawing seemed weak and characterless; it had no snap, there was no continuity in its composition. Comparing it with his earlier work, it appeared to him neither better nor worse; rather, he tried to convince himself, his eyes were opened now to the imperfections of his art, he could see its faults, and there remained but to find a way to rectify them. This, assuredly, must come with hard work; one was bound to accomplish big things with hard work! Grimly he persevered from day to day, finishing

one drawing and at once beginning another. The sheets of the heavy board he used, turned face to the wall, grew into cumbersome stacks that he was forever readjusting, repiling, moving to other parts of the room.

The evenings and Sundays he spent with Jane Boardman were very pleasant. Outside of his work, they supplied his only interest. She was most companionable and always in buoyant spirits; but it was in the understanding sympathy she gave him that he found the greatest satisfaction. Never did she fail to say the word that conveyed to him the positive knowledge that she had caught to a shade the meaning of his thought, or had grasped to a nicety his need for an expression of that sympathy he grew daily to depend upon more and more.

It was inevitable that this intimacy should lead Carey to a declaration of love. He had often told girls he had known—girls with whom he had been intimate back home—that he loved them. When he had attended the Art School he had always been in love with one girl or another. Making love was an exciting business, but he was far from considering himself as being *really* in love with Jane. He loved her—but he was not *in* love with her. That kind of love meant marriage and he had not the remotest idea of such a possibility. It had occurred to him that day when he was dressing to make his first call upon her and he had amused himself by allowing his imagination to dwell upon it, but he had never contemplated the matter for a moment seriously. It would interfere with his Art, and his profession was the thing nearest and dearest to him. He loved little Jane Boardman more than any girl he had ever known. Of that he was quite certain and he was eager to tell her so.

The confession came one cold Sunday in December, when they had spent the day at the Bronx Zoo and, tir-

ing of the animals, had walked out over the Park, along winding roads, frozen hard, with white, brittle ice in the ruts where water had gathered. There was no one in sight, for it was turning cold, and there was a nimble winter wind. It was hardly a day for love-making but Carey found the words came as readily to his lips as a much less significant statement might have done. It was a thrilling experience to tell her he loved her and to watch the effect of his words. Did she love him? What was the good of loving if it was not returned? Was there any one else? Didn't she care for him a little? He tried hard to make her answer his questions but only partially succeeded.

That night, on the landing before the door of the apartment, he kissed her for the first time. He did it very tenderly, very gently, gathering her in his arms, pressing her strongly to him, while his love for her rose up in his heart, welling over, possessing him completely.

It was not until a number of days after this that the idea of marrying Jane first occurred seriously to Carey. He was walking down Broadway, his mind busy with the thought of the girl who had come into his life, complicating it, disturbing him. It occurred to him that it was a contemptible thing to make her learn to love him if he was not in earnest himself. Indignation rose within him at this self-accusation. He was incapable of such meanness! Why—why, he *loved* her!

Suddenly the air reverberated with the words. Up toward the blue sky, beyond, above, higher still than the gaunt, cold steel and concrete buildings of the city, were flung the words that rioted in his mind and heart as their import first flashed into his consciousness. He *loved* her! *He loved little Jane Boardman!* In his heart, whose pure emotions he had abused, whose sanctity he had de-

graded, there had been born a great passion. It came to few. The marvel had come to him,—to *him!* Unworthy as he might be, weighted down as he was with the memory of his recent profligacy, yet, as a dove folding its white wings and nestling there, love had fluttered down from somewhere out of the world and alighted within him. The tears rushed into his eyes and he clenched his teeth. Marry her? Why, good God, he'd *die* for her! *His* Jane—*his* girl—nobody else's! She had been intended for him and he for her since the day they had been born. A mighty sword rent the curtain that hung before his eyes, and he saw, beyond, that country in whose existence he had never before believed. And there was Springer, smiling and holding out his hand. The miracle had happened; Carey, in that moment, joined the company of the lovers of the world.

That same evening, when Jane came out of the building in which the offices of the Consolidated Press Association were located, she found Carey waiting for her. Something in his expression made her inquire anxiously:

"What is it, Carey? Anything wrong?"

He shook his head, half smiling, and slipped his hand under her elbow; together they started to walk down Fourth Avenue.

"Where shall we go to-night?" Carey demanded. "I've got a lot I want to say to you."

"What is it, Carey? What has happened?" She was all solicitude.

"Nothing, nothing, my darling. I've just realised *how much I love you*. I have a number of things to tell you. Where can we go to talk? Let's have dinner somewhere, and take a long walk afterwards."

He accompanied Jane to her home and waited while

she put on a fresh linen collar and changed her hat. The atmosphere of the Boardman apartment was always cheerful and heartening. The old white-haired giant, Jane's father, and Carey had developed a genuine liking for one another. Although the former rarely spoke—and when he did, it was in a deep bass, half rumble, half growl—Carey felt no constraint when he was with him, and often caught the sharp twinkle under the white, bushy eyebrows that told him that his meaning had been understood, his jest appreciated, his sentiments approved. They had a secret understanding with one another that no one else shared.

Carey and Jane had dinner at *Guffanti's* on Seventh Avenue, where an excellent Italian *table d'hôte* dinner was served for the moderate price of seventy-five cents. It was crowded and noisy, but, sitting at one of the small side tables, they were entirely lost in the throng of diners and could speak as confidentially as they wished without fear of being overheard.

Carey poured out his love to Jane as he never had before. His eloquence seemed miserably inadequate to him, but he was gratified in a measure to observe its effect upon her.

"Carey, do you *really* love me that much?"

"Sweetheart, it's more than I can express, but I'll show you a devotion when we're married that will satisfy you, no matter how exacting you may be."

Jane absently toyed with the silverware, making vague patterns on the table cloth with the prong of her fork, but her lover saw the heightened colour in her face.

"Carey," she asked, in some hesitation and confusion, "when did you first begin to care?"

"On that excursion boat, I guess," he answered thoughtfully, "but I was too much of a simpleton to real-

ise it, then. It was to-day, for the first time, that it suddenly came over me how much you really mean to me."

There was still something constrained in Carey's manner. Usually they liked to loiter over their dinner; but, to-night, he was anxious to terminate it as soon as the coffee was served.

"I can't talk in here," he said. "I've got to get out in the street where we can talk as we walk along."

They presently found themselves outside in the cold confusion of the winter streets. It was a fortnight before Christmas, and the small shops that crowded each other on either side of the wide avenue were all brightly lighted. Christmas greens hung in the windows, whose glass panes were half-suffused with queer patterns of frost. Mounds of snow banked the sidewalks, awaiting the coming of the street cleaners, and sections of the pavements not as yet shovelled clear were covered with a three-inch packing of snow, trodden into a hard, smooth, slippery surface.

Carey and Jane crossed the Avenue and turned down a side street, where there were fewer people and more shadow. They were obliged to walk briskly, because the cold was sharp. When they reached Fifth Avenue, they unconsciously turned north on the deserted thoroughfare, as its sidewalks were thoroughly cleaned of the snow and the walking was good.

"Jane," Carey began, "I can't marry you without telling you what a rotter I've been. I love you too deeply, too earnestly to deceive you—about anything. Success came too rapidly to me, I guess. I thought all this out while I lay awake at night in the hospital. I got a true picture of myself, of what I was, and no one will know what agonies of remorse I've suffered—and, since I've come to realise how desperately I love you, it's all the

worse. There wasn't a more contemptible, unsufferably conceited man in this whole city than I a year ago!——"

"I won't have you say such things about yourself," she interrupted indignantly.

"My dear, you didn't know me then, thank God. You wouldn't have loved me; you'd have hated me. My head was turned with the money I made so easily, and I squandered it like the besotted ass I was. My God, Jane! If I could only wipe out the memory of those days of debauchery!"

They walked along silently for half a block.

"I don't know how much of the world you know," Carey stiffened himself to say what he had determined to tell her, "but you may take my word of honour that I've lived on the whole a cleaner life than most men. I have no reason ever to be ashamed to look my children in the face. My record, as far as that goes, is a square one, a clean one, but—I've got to tell you, that . . . with women . . . I've acted like other men . . . I can't marry you unless you know . . . for three months just before Blanchard shot me, I . . . there was a woman . . ."

Jane interrupted him.

"Please don't go on," she said, nervously and in a troubled voice. "You've told me all I have a right to know—all I want to know. I know something of men's lives,—I've talked with my father,—I've talked with him about you. He's a great, wise man,—my father is, and I love him with my whole heart. He has told me many things, only some of which I understand; but, whether I understand them or not, I believe them to be true. He told me that, if you were the right kind of man and really loved me, you would tell me about yourself—and the kind of a man you have been. But he warned me not

to allow you to tell me more than—any specific instances, I mean,—and—and I know he is right. I cannot reconcile the different codes of morals between men and women. I—I know a man's is not the same as a woman's. I don't pretend to understand it, to approve or condone it. It is a great pity that it is so—that it is wrong. But I cannot find it in my heart to hold you personally responsible for what I, differently sexed, might equally be guilty of."

Jane paused a moment. They had reached a crossing, and waited for a motor to pass. When she spoke again, her voice was low and constrained.

"It's—it's only the children I am thinking of . . ."

Carey, in turn, interrupted.

"No—no, Jane! I'd tell you if it were so! Believe me, Jane,—I pledge you my sacred word of honour!"

"Then that is all I wish to know,—that is what I have been dreading all these weeks since I began to realise how much I loved you. Don't tell me anything more. It would spoil my romance. I should never forget whatever you told me, and it would haunt me the rest of my life. I prefer not to know. Please, Carey, please. I'm sure I am right, even if my father hadn't advised me."

Carey walked beside her without answering. It would have relieved his mind and troubled conscience if he could have told her of his relations with Myra. And yet he could see that such a confession would always trouble her. He was moved too profoundly by her sweetness to press the point. He was only too ready to turn from the arduous duty he had decided to compel himself to perform, and, with a free heart and mind, to tell her again, for the thousandth time that night, how much he loved her.

It was all wonderful: the winter heavens, the winter streets, the hint of Christmas in the air, they two, in such supreme accord, in such perfect companionship, in such divine, intoxicating love.

CHAPTER III

CAREY and Jane were married at seven o'clock in the evening of St. Valentine's Day, in St. George's Church. After the ceremony, there was a supper served in the tiny dining room of the Boardman apartment. Only Joe Downer and a girl friend of Jane's had been invited, as it was impossible to seat more about the table. Old Mr. Boardman had been unable to go to the church, but, when the newly married pair came running up the long flight of stairs in advance of the others, they found him at the head of the table, sharpening a great carving knife preparatory to dismembering the two cold roast chickens before him. Mysteriously he had produced a quart of champagne that stood nearby in a bucket of ice, attaining a proper degree of coldness. As his daughter entered, he laid down the knife and steel and took her into the mighty embrace of his great arms. Down the bridge of his nose Carey noticed one tear trickle; it was the only sign of emotion he had ever seen on the face of the silent, grim giant.

Springer and Cecilia had been at the church; Mark Harrison, Doctor Floherty, McNeil and French were there, and Carey thought he recognised, in two bulging black figures who sat behind the others, aloof and apart, Mrs. Fillmore and Miss Watt. He had been very much excited, horribly conscious that his white vest would not

stay down as he pulled it, and that his tie was climbing his collar in back, and that his hair, that he had so carefully brushed, was badly mussed. He was not at all ready when the clergyman began :

"Dearly Beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God and in the face of this company——"

All through the service he kept repeating silently to himself, "I'm being married!—I'm being married!—I'm being married."

Jane, her head a trifle bent, appeared as calm and as self-contained as the minister himself. He caught sight of the tip of her nose, the curve of her cheek, the point of her chin, beneath the edge of the flowered hat she wore, and it abruptly came over him how dearly he loved her. Suddenly the voice of the priest changed from the solemn enunciation of the service to one of easy conversation. Carey realised he was being congratulated. It was all over; he and Jane were man and wife.

The supper party was not as gay and festive as Carey would have liked. Jane and her mother sat beside one another, silently holding hands, both conscious of their swiftly approaching parting. Old Mr. Boardman presided, taciturn as usual, at the head of the table, slicing the chicken, leaning forward to inspect the plates of the party, nodding to Horace to fill some glass that was growing empty. Jane's girl friend and Joe Downer maintained a feeble interchange of banalities, while the twins furnished a slight element of festivity by threatening Carey with rice, old shoes and tin cans tied to the axle of the taxi-cab that was waiting below, unless he agreed to be blackmailed to the extent of ten cents a head. Matters were not improved by the arrival of neighbours who confessed with unctuous good humour that they just *had* to come in and kiss the bride be-

fore her new husband carried her off. Their presence helped, however, to make the parting between Jane and her mother less tearful than it otherwise might have been. Somehow, the good-byes were said; Carey's hand was wrung and good luck wished him; Jane's gentle mother drew his head down upon her shoulder, rumpling his hair, while brokenly she urged him to take "good care of her little girl." The twins and Joe and Horace carried their two suit-cases, a belated wedding gift, and a large hat box down to the taxi-cab in the street. Together, Jane and Carey began the descent of the long, cold stone stairs, a trying ordeal, for every one in the building seemed waiting to see them make what was termed their "get-away." Carey could hear voices calling to one another below:

"Here they come!"

"The bride and groom're coming!"

"Bessie—Bessie! Oo-hoo, Bessie! Come quick! Here they come!"

They were stopped at landing after landing, while Jane's hand was pressed and she was kissed by the more impetuous. An occasional handful of rice followed them, and there was a general hub-bub of laughter and shrill cries.

A small crowd waited outside in the street. Horace held open the door of the cab, and Carey and Jane made a quick run for its sheltering protection. A roar broke from the crowd, and Carey found himself thankful that he had married a nimble woman, for Jane tripped into the dark interior of the taxi with hardly a second's delay, and Carey had only to pause the instant before he leaped in beside her. The door slammed; he heard Joe's voice shouting his name; the taxi lurched and lumbered over the broken surface of the street. A face leered in at

them through the window, and Carey swiftly pulled the shade over it. The impact of three missiles striking the back of the taxi brought from Jane a terrified:

"Carey! They're stoning us!"

Her confident husband laughed.

"Those are old shoes, my darling. They're wishing us luck!"

Jane had a friend about her own age who lived with a chaperon, governess, companion—a personage combining all these requirements—on East Seventy-sixth Street, a short block and a quarter from Fifth Avenue and the Park. Miss Galveston had an uncle who provided for her generously, but, being an unmarried man himself, and a lover of the comfort and seclusion of his club, he found that the problem of his niece was greatly simplified by the capable and reliable Miss Jenks, who assumed the care, the upbringing, and even the education of his sister's child for the modest sum of two hundred dollars a month.

Various reasons had led Miss Galveston's uncle to make her a Christmas present of a trip to Italy, a prospect that threw both Miss Jenks and her charge into a fever of excitement. So much must be done, so much provided for, so much arranged! There was the little apartment, so tiny and cozy, filled with Miss Jenks' inlaid, precious furniture and treasured souvenirs of former, happily-remembered travels. It would not do to leave these in an empty apartment to mildew or be stolen, while storage was such a bother and so expensive. If some one, a careful bachelor, or a widow and her daughter, or, better still, two maiden ladies, sisters perhaps, could be found who would rent the little apartment just as it was, for the time they were to be gone, Miss Jenks

declared she'd let it go for no more than the rent she paid herself, and ask not one penny for the use of all her pretty furniture.

"Would a married couple do?" Miss Galveston suggested.

"Children?" Miss Jenks had popped out the question as she might have pulled a cork from a bottle.

"Oh, my, no! They're only just—they aren't married yet! I was thinking of Jane Boardman. She was saying the other day that, when she was married, she wanted to go to keeping house right away, only there wasn't any furniture."

Miss Jenks considered the matter thoughtfully, as she ripped basting threads out of the travelling skirt, the hem of which she had just finished stitching on the machine.

"I should have to see the man first." She delivered this decision in spite of the row of pins she held between her lips.

So it was that Jane had brought Carey out the following Sunday afternoon, and he was introduced to Miss Jenks for inspection. There was something attractive about the house in which Miss Galveston and her chap-eron lived. It was white, prim, narrow, and rather retiring beside the towering apartment buildings on either side. There was a modest tailor shop on the ground floor—an insult to the neighbourhood, Miss Jenks assured Carey, that the landlord had promised to rectify as soon as the lease was up. Tucked away, as if it were ashamed of itself, a small doorway cuddled down beside the shop, which gave access to the apartments above. There were four of these apartments, all alike, except the top one, which had the distinction of possessing a real kitchen. The others consisted of two fair-sized, narrow rooms connected by a long neck of hall which, cut into sections by,

real doors or suggested divisions, furnished a kitchenette, a bath, a wash-stand and china closet. The one occupied by Miss Jenks and her charge was on the third floor and was exceptionally bright and sunny, and the rent of thirty dollars a month seemed moderate to Carey at the time. It was completely furnished, and Miss Jenks assured them that all they would have to do would be to move right in. This was the argument that had the most weight with them. They were eager to be married, and their wedding would have to be postponed many months if they had to wait to save the money to furnish a house properly.

Carey had been obliged to dispose of his tapestries, his tall candlesticks, and the big oriental rug that had covered the floor of the Fifty-ninth Street studio. They had brought less than a quarter of the sum he had originally paid, but he had parted with them with hardly a regret. They reminded him of a period of his life that would always be a humiliation. Besides this consideration, he was desperately in need of funds. The excursions with Jane, the intimate luncheons, the dinners and theatres they enjoyed together, while never extravagant, required money, and, in addition, there were his living expenses, his model hire, his artist's materials, which, in his last effort to make something of his art, he would not permit himself to sacrifice.

It was after they had viewed Miss Jenks' tiny quarters and he had seen the shining light of happiness in Jane's eyes as she beheld in anticipation the vision of beginning life in such bright and charming quarters, that Carey took a final, decisive step. Deliberately he resigned the hope of ever attaining again that pinnacle of popularity in his profession which he had known for so short a time.

He gave up his Art. It was the greatest sacrifice he

had ever made. Not even Jane understood, and he took pains to see that she did not. He knew too well the heroic stand she would have taken, and her happiness meant more to him now than anything else.

Mark Harrison had once been a retoucher in a photo-engraving establishment. He had often regaled Springer and Carey with amusing stories of his early experiences before he had launched out as a cartoonist. He had told of the drudgery of the work, the unending succession of photographs whose backgrounds must be airbrushed, or obliterated with opaque red; of portraits whose features must be strengthened, eyes put in, noses outlined, mouths and chins more sharply indicated; of legs and arms that must be added; of summer scenes that must be changed to winter; of crookedly photographed landscapes that must be straightened; of the hundred and one calls made upon him and the other men in that department. Day in and day out, it had been rush, rush, rush; there was never any praise for work done well or finished on time, but always blame or criticism when the time allotted to finish a certain piece of work proved insufficient to complete it satisfactorily and there had been a few minutes' delay. No wonder there was always a demand for retouchers when a good one could always get a better job at easier work; a satisfactory retoucher was capable of work of a higher grade.

But was he? That was the question Carey asked himself as he considered the matter. He knew he was clever at retouching photographs, for much of the work the railroad at home had given him had been of this nature, during the years he had attended to its art matters. He had achieved some difficult transformations with certain photographs. Joe had taught him the use of the air-brush.

But, if he understood retouching and did it unusually well, did that prove he was worthy of more exacting work? He did not debate the matter with himself very long. The shining look in Jane's eyes, as she gazed about Miss Jenks' complete, diminutive quarters, decided him.

He obtained a job in the first engraving house to which he applied. The Pillsbury Engraving Company was located on lower Fifth Avenue. It occupied two upper floors of a corner loft building, and had done business in the same spot for twenty years.

As Carey stepped out of the elevator and stood hesitatingly before the counter, a pimply-faced youth, in a striped canvas apron, paused a moment in his hurried assortment of a pile of proofs to gaze curiously at him as he inquired if there was a retoucher's job vacant. He ran his eye over Carey appraisingly, and, without turning his head, bawled at the top of his voice the single imperative syllable:

"Dick!"

A small, freckled, snub-nosed boy stuck his head through an open doorway with a petulant:

"What d'yer want?"

"Take this man up to Mr. Clements."

Through a confusion of workmen and the paraphernalia of an engraving plant, Carey followed his young guide. The atmosphere was vibrant with a bedlam of small noises: the persistent droning of machinery, the quick raps of hammers affixing plates to wooden blocks, the whirl of a steel saw, the sharp bite of a routing machine. Over all there prevailed the penetrating odour of powerful acids. Up back stairs, through a gallery where the cameras were located, and which the developing rooms adjoined, Carey made his way. Beyond, in a small, bare room, under a brilliant skylight, sat three

young men silently bending over their respective drawing boards. The fourth, a wizened little man with glasses and a stiff red beard, sat on a slightly raised platform, brush in hand, intent upon his work.

"Mr. Clements, this man wants a job!" The snub-nosed boy delivered his message and vanished. The four occupants of the room turned round to examine the applicant. Carey was conscious of his good clothes and the difference in his face and bearing from the men who stared at him.

The anarchistic-looking foreman asked Carey the necessary questions regarding his previous experience, directed him to a vacant drawing table, and then placed some photographs before him that were waiting to be retouched. When they were finished, Clements examined them critically. Curtly he told Carey to report at eight o'clock the following Monday morning; he would receive twenty-five dollars a week.

That evening Carey asked Jane if she thought a steady income of a hundred dollars a month would be sufficient for their needs. With pencil and paper they figured out their expenses. Thirty dollars for rent, ten dollars a week for the table and laundry, ten dollars a month for gas and electricity. It left a magnificent balance of twenty dollars, half of which they certainly should be able to save against a rainy day. Neither of them would need clothes for a long time, as Carey's wardrobe was still well stocked with the tailored creations of his days of plenty, and Jane's savings were all to go into a very complete trousseau. There was also a nest-egg of two hundred dollars in the bank remaining from the sale of the tapestries and rug.

"There will be an extra twenty-five dollars whenever

there's a fifth Saturday in the month," Carey said happily.

"An extra twenty-five dollars?" Jane asked, puzzled and surprised.

Then he told her of what he had done; but his careless air did not deceive the girl. She looked at him silently for some minutes, and Carey saw stormy opposition gathering in her eyes.

"Listen, my dearest girl . . ."

He stopped her before she had time to begin. She was not hard to convince as he drew before her eyes the picture of the happiness that would be theirs if she let him make a sacrifice which, after all, he assured her, meant so little to him, merely relieving him from the constant work and uncertainty of an unprofitable profession. There was Miss Jenks' apartment ready for them, and Miss Jenks herself waiting for their final word. They could be married right away; at any rate, early in February.

It was a sufficient reward for what his decision had cost him just to see her face begin to glow and to watch the shining, happy light come back into her eyes.

"Carey!" she exclaimed, as a brilliant thought occurred to her, "wouldn't it be a splendid idea to be married on Valentine's Day?"

Carey's answer was to take her in his arms, turn her face up to his own and press his lips to hers. There was nothing in the world that was not worth sacrificing for this wonderful girl. At such moments, Carey's love was almost an anguish. He found it impossible to express it, and yet he was forever trying. It was a constant surprise to him that she should possibly conceive for him a similar passion. Other lovers, he was convinced, cared not as they did. Great love was permitted to only

a few ; how it was, by what act of Heaven he had been selected to experience it, he did not know. Springer, unquestionably, loved Cecilia ; but it was ridiculous to suppose that he bore her any such blind, fierce love as Carey knew. Springer had just happened to meet Cecilia at the moment when he was ready to fall in love ! He did not know Jane. That was the difference. By some whirl of fortune, by some unaccountable direction of Fate, some manifestation of divine will, Carey had met the right girl and had had the brains to see in her his true mate, the wife that was made for his particular needs, the woman who could awake in him the great passion that shook and thrilled him.

Carey and Jane had no honeymoon. The day following their marriage, a Sunday, they spent alone in the first intoxication of their wedded happiness. Monday morning at eight o'clock, Carey must punch his time card in the office of the Pillsbury Engraving Company and listen for the rest of the day to the guttural directions and comments of Mr. Clements. The parting from Jane on that first morning was a hard wrench ; it seemed an inhuman thing to leave her alone all day in that apartment. Firmly he told himself that he must go to his work and face the prospect of not seeing her for eleven hours. It never occurred to him that he was no different from millions of bridegrooms who had preceded him, or from millions who would follow. For many years, the comic weeklies had made sport of this moment of separation between people just married ; but Carey did not recognise his own case as being in any way similar. Springer and Cecilia had once irritated him by their trite and conventional manner of living, their view-point, speech and code. He failed to see that he and Jane were

guilty of exactly what he had found fault with in them. They were true to their type.

Somehow, the first day and those that succeeded were lived through and, when the afternoons began to wane, it was a glorious anticipation to think of going home to her. Carey walked to and from the office, saving car-fare and getting exercise. It took him forty-five minutes to reach his home. Jane, too, counted the hours as well as he, and always, after he had turned the corner where the big synagogue stood facing the Park and had passed a certain flight of steps half way down the block, he got his first glimpse of the house, and never failed to see her figure at the window watching for him. She would leave her post when he reached the corner of Madison Avenue, and meet him at the foot of the stairs in the dark little hall into which opened the retiring entrance that cuddled beside the tailor shop. That meeting was always the supreme moment of the day.

Dinner would be ready, a delicious meal of usually three and often four courses. Carey never ceased to marvel at his wife's cooking, her cleverness and ingenuity. Never was an uneaten morsel of food wasted; in some appetizing manner it appeared upon the table at another meal. Jane claimed that she had her mother to thank for this secret of domestic economy. Certain it was she ran the house on an astonishingly small income. She allowed herself a dollar a day for their food; but often had to do with less. There was continually some small, unforeseen expense, which had to be paid in part out of the appropriation for their modest table. The only bills Carey and Jane were obliged to run were for gas and electricity. They paid cash for everything else, even the newspaper that Carey bought in the morning on his way down town, and the milk that Jane carried home

from the dairy when she needed it. It was she who bore the brunt of their financial problem, but Carey did his share to the extent of giving up lunches and learning how to roll his cigarettes in order to use a cheaper grade of tobacco. In place of food at noon time, he patronised the soda-water counter beneath the rotunda in Siegel-Cooper's mammoth department store, where he could get a cup of coffee and two saltine crackers for five cents. The coffee was served to him in a long china cup set in a metal holder, and in this form it did not make him conspicuous to be seen drinking it. Certainly he felt much less self-conscious standing among the crowd that always thronged this soda counter than he would have done making a five-cent purchase at either Childs or one of the new "wait-on-yourself" restaurants.

But there were no real hardships for either of them. It was all fun; they were like children together, and Carey regarded his self-denial as an offering to her who stood for all that was worth loving and worth having in life.

Spring overtook them unexpectedly. Every one else in the thronging city who had endured the cold and the rigours of the hard winter, was waiting eagerly for the mellow spring; but Carey and Jane had been too happy to notice that snow had fallen and been cleared away, had fallen again, and once more been cleared away, only to cover the streets again as soon as the army of men and the long string of dump carts had made the streets passable once more. Spring came to them as an added blessing; it was as if Nature found their union good and smiled upon them.

Walking down through the Park every morning, Carey watched the buds on the trees slowly swell and fatten, until, urged by a warm, persistent sun, simultaneously

they burst their casings, pushing their wrinkled green noses out of their shells, like rabbits cautiously emerging from their burrows. The grass that stretched away on either side of his path took on a lovelier verdant color. Birds shrilled joyously in the trees and hopped energetically among the bushes. Squirrels frisked in and out, and up and down; even the poor beasts in the Zoo seemed aware the Spring had come, and lolled luxuriously on their sides enjoying the temperate air.

As the weather grew warmer and June brought more rich golden days, Jane formed the habit of walking down to the end of the Park to sit somewhere near the triumphant Sherman statue and wait for Carey as he came striding eagerly up the Avenue after the day's work was over. He could always distinguish her white linen dress and her blue parasol on the crowded benches. He knew the instant that she, on her part, recognised his figure as he crossed the square. They were always conscious of others' stares when they met. No matter how reserved they were, how restrained in manner, how conventional their deportment, they knew that all about could see the love that shone out of their eyes and understand the happy smile that illumined their faces. But it was nothing of which to be ashamed, they told each other. If the curious idlers on the benches witnessed their happiness, let it do them what good it might.

Those were never-to-be-forgotten walks home through the lengthening shadows and the brilliant shafts of sunlight that crossed their path. The Park was practically deserted at this hour; the ubiquitous nurse-maids had wheeled their charges home. A belated group of children still frolicked, perhaps, somewhere under the trees. Their shrill cries and laughter sounded pleasantly on the soft evening air. An occasional hum of a motor marked

the swift passage of some delayed man of affairs, or some late tea-drinkers going home to dinner. Unexpectedly, by an abrupt turn of the path, the romping children would be discovered, the placid, Italian mother waiting patiently for them to grow weary of their play. They were curly-headed, swarthy children, with large, sparkling black eyes, shouting strange, unchildlike jargon at each other. Slowly Carey and Jane sauntered homeward, speaking little, arm in arm, conscious of the bond of absolute sympathy that knitted their souls together in perfect happiness.

If, out of the darkness of a wakeful moment during the night, or brought up suddenly before him by a chance word, a familiar spot, a meaningless allusion, a glance, a sigh, there rose before Carey's eyes the spectre of himself in another rôle, in other surroundings, he fiercely shut his eyes and bowed his head in bitter self-reproach. It was all so unfair to Jane! He must keep his regrets and his remorse to himself: It would be unfairer still to her to mar the peace and serenity of her heart by revelations that she had begged him not to make. She was content to remain in ignorance of that dark chapter in his life. But he longed to throw himself on his knees and, burying his face in her lap, pour out to her his confession of sin and weakness. He wanted, with all the strength that was in him, to somehow make reparation. He had reassured an uneasy conscience, in the days of his wantonness, that he was harming no one by his folly. If only he had known that the injury and the wrong were accumulating and being saved for little Jane!

Carey bitterly paid for those days of recklessness. His repentance brought him no comfort, did him no good. Constantly he felt he had no right to his great happiness,

and that a punishment was awaiting him which he was only too ready to admit he deserved. She might be taken from him! That was the fear continually lurking in the shadows behind his back, in the dark corners, that he could never move his eyes quick enough to see.

Once he saw Gerald Crofts and Myra in a box at the theatre. He and Jane were hanging over the brass railing of the family circle, so there was no possibility of Myra's recognising him. Carey felt like a snail encountering its own slimy track. It was intolerable to him that Jane should even breathe the same air with Myra. He controlled himself until the end of the act, and then complained that he felt giddy and that he was afraid he was going to faint. They hurried out of the theatre; but Jane's solicitude supplied additional fuel for the flames of his remorse.

He derived a certain satisfaction from such moments of acute anguish. It was the only way in which he could be punished. It was bitter to remember, in the midst of such perfect happiness, how utterly undeserving he was. Only years of tender consideration, of thoughtful ministration, of loving solicitude and care for the woman he had wronged and married would wipe out the black stain upon his soul. Perhaps it was this passionate desire to make reparation which urged him so constantly to new endeavours to please her, to plan for her ease and comfort, to think ahead for her, that convinced Jane that hers was the most gentle, unselfish, devoted husband that ever woman had.

CHAPTER IV

IT was a late afternoon during the following summer, and Carey was clearing the weeds from the tomato beds in the tiny truck garden at the back of the house. Little Toby Springer was regarding him through a crack in the fence, making curious noises through his nose to attract his attention. Carey straightened himself painfully. He enjoyed the work of puttering about his garden but he was unaccustomed to it, and bending over for so long made his back ache. He regarded Toby reflectively, speculating upon what Carey Junior would be like in another year when he would be Toby's age. Toby was an unusually beautiful child, with the regular features of his father and the dull glory of his mother's hair. People raved about him a great deal; but Carey shared Jane's belief that, while Toby was handsome and well behaved, he was too placid and stolid and did not have half as much natural intelligence as Carey Junior showed at six months. Carey Junior—or "Carey-Ju," as they called him—made his own particular bid for beauty. He had his father's yellow hair and high colour; but it was the expression of intelligent interest and happy alertness in so young a baby that made him especially attractive.

As Carey returned Toby's stare, following his own thought, it seemed to him that Carey Junior was a thoroughly satisfactory son. Jane had just put him into short

dresses, and, as he sat lolling, rather spinelessly, in his new high chair, his pink toes waving beyond the edge of the tiny dress, Carey, as he recalled the picture to mind, felt a thrill of pride and love.

The screen door from the kitchen of the house that abutted on to the rear of the one Carey and Jane occupied was suddenly swung open, closing again with a smart clap, as Springer came out on the landing at the head of the back stairs.

"Hello, Carey," he called. "How's your strawberries?"

Carey frowned and shook his head discouragedly.

"Archibald's dog scratched the beds to pieces. I'll have to get some more plants. Fisher's quite decent about letting me have 'em."

Springer came down into his own yard and, avoiding the array of diapers that were floating from the criss-crossed clothesline, swung Toby to his shoulder and leaned over the low fence to inspect Carey's work.

"I wish my lettuce would head-in that way," he said, gazing enviously at the short double row of firm specimens.

"I wish I had the time *you* have to put in on my garden," Carey rejoined.

"I don't see what you've got to kick about. You've a much better-looking garden than I have!"

"Well, you don't like gardening as much as I do. If you did, you'd spend a great deal more time on it. If I get up early enough, I can put in an hour or half-an-hour before train time, and you know I don't get home until six-fifteen! There's just that and Sundays."

Springer nodded his head, admitting the point.

"Don't do that, Toby!" he exclaimed to the child, who was plucking at the hairs in his eyebrows, "you hurt Dad!"

"I'll have less time than ever, now," he continued; "I've just got two boys' books from The Occident to illustrate, and there are six more instalments of the *East and West* serial for which I have to make those thumb-nail pen-and-inks. I've got to get in and hustle. The Occident wants the illustrations by August first! The books are fall publications."

Carey did not answer. It always hurt him when he learned of others' progress in the profession he had abandoned. He wished Springer every success. Or, putting it more honestly to himself, success in other work. It had not been so bad while they were living in New York City; but, since he and Jane had come over to Leonia, an artists' colony, he had found his failure to make a living by his Art a constant rankling pain. It was not as if he doubted his ability to do better work than his neighbours. That was the point of the whole matter. He *knew* that he was a better workman, a better artist, than any of the men who lived about him. Often he asked himself, if he had persisted a little longer, if he had postponed his marriage another six months or a year, would his chance of success through legitimate work have come? The fact that he had known what popularity and preference meant, made it seem all the harder. These had once been his! But, when he thought of Jane and Carey-Ju, there remained no doubt in his mind that the sacrifice had been worth while. But he wondered about the future. Was he always to be a retoucher? Nothing more? Was Carey-Ju to grow up to refer to him casually, negligibly, as "My father,—he works, you know; he's a retoucher in an Engraving Company; been there for twenty-odd years"? Or, was his end to be among those who came early every morning to the Metropolitan Museum to get a place among the group of old men and women who

made hurried copies of the painting popularly known as *Paul and Virginia* to sell for what they could get,—two dollars, perhaps?

These were bitter reflections, and Carey could not strive against them. Persistently they came. His wife knew what distressed him, and often, when he was a prey to these unprofitable and gloomy thoughts, she would come softly up behind him, lay one cool forearm about his neck and touch his yellow hair gently with her lips. He knew she understood, and it was her rare and perfect sympathy that always furnished him with fresh courage. He had become an expert workman; to him was given always the most difficult photographs to be redeemed or altered; and his salary had been raised to forty dollars a week. But it was an ignominious success at best, a cheap achievement, one that he held in contempt and despised in his heart.

A week, ten days ago,—whenever it was—that Jane had put Carey-Ju in short dresses for the first time and sat him, fat and laughing, in the new high chair, Carey had been carried out of himself by the picture his son had made with his golden, ethereal hair, that curled in tangled wisps about his head, and the five little, round, pink-putty marbles that stuck out from either side under the hem of his dress and represented his toes! When Carey had laid his artist's materials away, he had made up his mind that he would never put his hand to them again. For him, at that moment, his art was over. But the charm of the baby and the wish, somehow, to catch and preserve it led him to root out from among the trunks and packing cases in the attic the old box of paints and drawing materials, and the dusty drawing table that had followed him about for so many years. There were some pastel crayons,—most of them broken and scat-

tered—but still enough for his immediate purpose—and Carey had spent a happy Sunday afternoon in handling one of his old mediums and drawing his son's portrait. And the result was not bad. He knew it was a good likeness, and it had something of Carey-Ju's bright, intelligent interest. The picture suggested that the baby had suddenly heard a funny noise and had cocked his head a little to one side, expectant and curious, ready to hear it again.

Jane was delighted, and her praise had been very pleasant to hear, even if her interest was a mother's. Carey had been tempted to show it to Springer; but he knew it would have put his friend in the embarrassing position of having to say it was good, whether he liked it or not. So he told himself that he had been all through the game and was too disillusioned to allow himself to be foolishly encouraged by a happy likeness of his boy.

The screen door banged again, and Carey looked up to smile and waive his hand to Cecilia. She had become more lovely in motherhood than she had ever been before. She was much heavier, her arms and neck and bosom possessing a certain voluptuous ampleness that gave her a soft, reposeful serenity.

Carey compared her for a moment to his own wife. They were widely different types, and, to Carey, Jane was the more charming, the more perfectly made, the more beautiful. Cecilia's bigness appeared almost cumbersome to him beside the finer, more subtle and delicate qualities of little Jane, who, he decided, was the more feminine of the two.

"Bring Toby in, Fleming," Cecilia called to her husband, shielding her eyes from the sun's last shooting rays; "it's time for his bath, and Mary has the water running."

"Where's Jane?" she asked, addressing Carey.

"I'm sure I don't know, my dear," Carey called back. "I came over from town a little earlier this afternoon to dig in the garden, and Minna said Jane had gone over to New York on the two-ten. I can't imagine why she isn't home by now. What time is it?"

"It's after six,—I don't know how much," Cecilia answered.

"Well, she ought to be on that next boat. I guess I'll walk down to the trolley and wait for her."

It *was* late for Jane, especially as he knew of nothing that was of sufficient importance to detain her. Usually she rang him up at the office when she came to town unexpectedly, and arranged what boat they should take back together. Besides, she was nursing Carey-Ju, and four hours was the longest she had ever left him. She had probably given Minna a bottle of modified milk to appease his young appetite while she was gone,—but it was more than four hours now!

The old, terrifying fear that something had happened to her suddenly leaped upon him. He had not been so ridiculously apprehensive about her since she had heroically come through the agony of her travail and brought Carey-Ju into the world; but he always felt nervous and frightened when he was uncertain where she was or if she failed to return when expected.

As he was walking back to the house, to slip on his coat and have one look at Carey-Ju before he went down to the car line, he heard her whistle. It was his own call to her when he came home in the evenings, and it always brought her, sweet and fragrant, to the door to meet him.

Carey hurried around the house and saw her as she was fumbling with the latch of the gate. She had been

running, and was struggling to catch her breath, her face radiant and glowing.

Her husband caught her in his arms and hugged her to him, in reaction from his fear.

"My darling," he said, consolingly, a mild reproach in his voice, "you shouldn't run that way. Come into the house and sit down while you catch your breath. Now, just wait a minute——"

"But, Carey—but, Carey—I!" she gasped.

Her husband became suddenly aware that she was unusually agitated. Behind the happy smile in her eyes and upon her lips there was a hint of tears. Apprehensively he leaned toward her.

"Dearest—what has happened?"

She put her arms about his neck and began to sob incoherently.

Carey was alarmed. He half-carried, half-supported her into the house. A feeling of approaching calamity filled him.

"Jane,—my darling!" he said, his voice betraying his agitation. "Tell me, what is it?"

The tone had its effect.

She smiled up at him through happy tears.

"No—no, Carey. It isn't bad news, dearest. It's good—it's *good* news!"

She flung her arms again about his neck and kissed him passionately.

"My—my own,—my darling,—my husband," she whispered. "I know what you have suffered. I've known every minute what you've been through!"

Carey gazed at her, distressed, uncomprehending.

She laughed happily again at his puzzled expression.

"Dear, I've sold it! I've sold Carey-Ju's picture—to Mr. Sherman—and he's delighted with it!—wants it for

the cover of their Christmas issue. Here's the cheque for seventy-five dollars!" she cried triumphantly, opening her bag and waving it in the air.

Dazedly, Carey took the cheque from her and gazed at the familiar signature at the bottom.

"And, what is more, Carey dear," his wife said, kissing him eagerly again, "he gave me this, and said it was about time he was making good his promises."

She pulled something else from her bag, and into Carey's hands fluttered the long, printed sheets he knew so well and had coveted so long,—the galley proofs of a story.

"He wants three pictures, and agrees to pay one hundred and fifty dollars. And it isn't on speculation; *it's an order!*"

She stood off to watch the effect of her communication; but she was unprepared for Carey's emotion.

It was all too bewildering, too sudden, too tremendous. He sank into a chair and covered his face with his hands, struggling to grasp the significance of it all, to realise that his chance had come again, that his deliverance from drudgery was at hand. Riding over and above these rushing thoughts, there rose an overwhelming love for her who, sensing his distress, had quietly, and without word to him, taken the simple portrait he had made of their son to her old employer on the chance—or the confident belief, rather—that it would please him. Brave, faithful, loyal, trusting, loving little Jane!

He held out his arms to her, the tears blinding his eyes, and she came to him, meeting his hands, his lips, his heart, his love, with hers.

And so they sat together for a long time, until a faint wail from upstairs roused the conscience-stricken mother.

She sped upstairs, and Carey wandered out upon the porch, and gazed out across the Jersey landscape and watched the brilliant orange in the western sky fade to pink and graduate, by indistinguishable degrees, to faint azure, and abruptly change to the ever-deepening shades of blue as the canopy of heaven stretched eastward.

Jane presently came to call him for supper.

"Has it meant so much to you, my dear," she asked, slipping her arm about him as his encircled her, "giving up the work you wanted to do,—giving it up for me?"

"Dearest, no one knows better than you do whether I considered the sacrifice worth making for what I got in return. But I was thinking," he continued, "of something Gregory Shilling said to me when I first came to New York and went to him for advice. I've never forgotten it, but I never so fully recognised the truth of it as now. It was this: That no man can interpret life until he has learned something of what life is and has begun to understand it. It's because I think that I am at last beginning to understand life that I believe so firmly that I will still make good at what I want most to be."

Jane kissed him, and they turned into the house.

"You know," Carey said, ruminating, as they sat down to the table, "you know, I think old Joe Downer would like to hear about this. I think I'll wire him."

THE END



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